# Encounter

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*Vladimir Nabokov*

# *The Vane Sisters*

I MIGHT never have heard of Cynthia's death, had I not run, that night, into D., whom I had also lost track of for the last four years or so; and I might never have run into D., had I not got involved in a series of trivial investigations.

The day, a compunctious Sunday after a week of blizzards, had been part jewel, part mud. In the midst of my usual afternoon stroll through the small hilly town attached to the girls' college where I taught French literature, I had stopped to watch a family of brilliant icicles drip-dripping from the eaves of a frame house. So clear-cut were their pointed shadows on the white boards behind them that I was sure the shadows of the falling drops should be visible too. But they were not. The roof jutted too far out, perhaps, or the angle of vision was faulty, or, again, I did not chance to be watching the right icicle when the right drop fell. There was a rhythm, an alternation in the dropping that I found as teasing as a coin trick. It led me to inspect the corners of several house blocks, and this brought me to Kelly Road, and right to the house where D. used to live when he was instructor here. And as I looked up at the eaves of the adjacent garage with its full display of transparent stalactites backed by their blue silhouettes, I was rewarded at last, upon choosing one, by the sight of what might be described as the dot of an exclamation mark leaving its ordinary position to glide down very fast—a jot faster than the thaw-drop it raced. This twinned twinkle was delightful but not completely satisfying; or rather it only sharpened my appetite for other tidbits of light and shade, and I walked on in a state of raw awareness that seemed to transform the whole of my being into one big eyeball rolling in the world's socket.

Through peacocked lashes I saw the dazzling diamond reflection of the low sun on the round back of a parked automobile. To all kinds of things a vivid pictorial sense had been restored by the sponge of the thaw. Water in overlapping festoons flowed down one sloping street and turned gracefully into another. With ever so slight a note of meretricious appeal, narrow passages between buildings revealed treasures of brick and purple. I remarked for the first time the humble fluting—last echoes of grooves on the shafts of columns—ornamenting a garbage can, and I also saw the rippling upon its lid—circles diverging from a fantastically ancient centre. Erect, dark-headed shapes of dead snow (left by the blades of a bulldozer last Friday) were lined up like rudimentary penguins along the curbs, above the brilliant vibration of live gutters.

I walked up, and I walked down, and I walked straight into a delicately dying sky, and finally the sequence of observed and observant things brought me, at my usual eating time, to a street so distant from my usual eating place that I decided to try a restaurant which stood on the fringe of the town. Night had fallen without sound or ceremony when I came out again. The lean ghost, the elongated umbra cast by a parking meter upon some damp snow, had a strange ruddy tinge; this I made out to be due to the tawny red light of the restaurant sign above



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the sidewalk; and it was then—as I loitered there, wondering rather wearily if in the course of my return tramp I might be lucky enough to find the same in neon blue—it was then that a car crunched to a standstill near me and D. got out of it with an exclamation of feigned pleasure.

He was passing, on his way from Albany to Boston, through the town he had dwelt in before, and more than once in my life have I felt that stab of vicarious emotion followed by a rush of personal irritation against travellers who seem to feel nothing at all upon revisiting spots that ought to harass them at every step with wailing and writhing memories. He ushered me back into the bar that I had just left, and after the usual exchange of buoyant platitudes came the inevitable vacuum which he filled with the random words: "Say, I never thought there was anything wrong with Cynthia Vane's heart. My lawyer tells me she died last week."

2

He was still young, still brash, still shifty, still married to the gentle, exquisitely pretty woman who had never learned or suspected anything about his disastrous affair with Cynthia's hysterical young sister, who in her turn had known nothing of the interview I had had with Cynthia when she suddenly summoned me to Boston to make me swear I would talk to D. and get him "kicked out" if he did not stop seeing Sybil at once—or did not divorce his wife (whom incidentally she visualised through the prism of Sybil's wild talk as a termagant and a fright). I had cornered him immediately. He had said there was nothing to worry about—had made up his mind, anyway, to give up his college job and move with his wife to Albany where he would work in his father's firm; and the whole matter, which had threatened to become one of those hopelessly entangled situations that drag on for years, with peripheral sets of well-meaning friends endlessly discussing it in universal secrecy—and even founding, among themselves, new intimacies upon its alien woes—came to an abrupt end.

I remember sitting next day at my raised desk in the large classroom where a mid-year examination in French Lit. was being held on the eve of Sybil's suicide. She came in on high heels, with a suitcase, dumped it in a corner where several other bags were stacked, with a single shrug slipped her fur coat off her thin shoulders, folded it on her bag, and with two or three other girls stopped before my desk to ask when would I mail them their grades. It would take me a week, beginning from to-morrow, I said, to read the stuff. I also remember wondering whether D. had already informed her of his decision—and I felt acutely unhappy about my dutiful little student as during one hundred and fifty minutes my gaze kept reverting to her, so childishly slight in close-fitting grey, and kept observing that carefully waved dark hair, that small, small-flowered hat with a little hyaline veil as worn that season and under it her small face broken into a cubist pattern by scars due to a skin disease, pathetically masked by a sun-lamp tan that hardened her features whose charm was further impaired by her having painted everything that could be painted, so that the pale gums of her teeth between cherry-red chapped lips and the diluted blue ink of her eyes under darkened lids were the only visible openings into her beauty.

Next day, having arranged the ugly copybooks alphabetically, I plunged into their chaos of scripts and came prematurely to Valevsky and Vane whose books I had somehow misplaced. The first was dressed up for the occasion in a semblance of legibility, but Sybil's work displayed her usual combination of several demon hands. She had begun in very pale, very hard pencil which had conspicuously embossed the blank verso, but had produced little of permanent value on the upper-side of the page. Happily the tip soon broke, and Sybil continued in another, darker lead, gradually lapsing into the blurred thickness of what looked almost like charcoal, to which, by sucking the blunt point, she had contributed some traces of lipstick. Her work, although even poorer than I had expected, bore all the signs of a kind of desperate con-

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scientiousness, with underscores, transposes, unnecessary footnotes, as if she were intent upon rounding up things in the most respectable manner possible. Then she had borrowed Mary Valevsky's fountain pen and added: *"Cette examain est finie ainsi que ma vie. Adieu, jeunes filles!* Please, *Monsieur le Professeur,* contact *ma soeur* and tell her that Death was not better than D minus, but definitely better than Life minus D."

I lost no time in ringing up Cynthia who told me it was all over—had been all over since eight in the morning—and asked me to bring her the note, and when I did, beamed through her tears with proud admiration for the whimsical use ("Just like her!") Sybil had made of an examination in French literature. In no time she "fixed" two highballs, while never parting with Sybil's notebook—by now splashed with soda water and tears—and went on studying the death message, whereupon I was impelled to point out to her the grammatical mistakes in it and to explain the way "girl" is translated in American colleges lest students innocently bandy around the French equivalent of "wench," or worse. These rather tasteless trivialities pleased Cynthia hugely as she rose, with gasps, above the heaving surface of her grief. And then, holding that limp notebook as if it were a kind of passport to a casual Elysium (where pencil points do not snap and a dreamy young beauty with an impeccable complexion winds a lock of her hair on a dreamy forefinger, as she meditates over some celestial test), Cynthia led me upstairs, to a chilly little bedroom just to show me, as if I were the police or a sympathetic Irish neighbour, two empty pill bottles and the tumbled bed from which a tender, inessential body, that D. must have known down to its last velvet detail, had been already removed.

3

IT WAS four or five months after her sister's death that I began seeing Cynthia fairly often. By the time I had come to New York for some vacational research in the Public Library she had also moved to that city where for some odd reason (in vague connection, I presume, with artistic motives) she had taken what people, immune to gooseflesh, term a "cold water" flat, down in the scale of the city's transverse streets. What attracted me were neither her ways, which I thought repulsively vivacious, nor her looks, which other men thought striking. She had wide-spaced eyes very much like her sister's, of a frank, frightened blue with dark points in a radial arrangement. The interval between her thick black eyebrows was always shiny, and shiny too were the fleshy volutes of her nostrils. The coarse texture of her epiderm looked almost masculine, and, in the stark lamplight of her studio, you could see the pores of her thirty-two-year-old face fairly gaping at you like something in an aquarium. She used cosmetics with as much zest as her little sister had, but with an additional slovenliness that would result in her big front teeth getting some of the rouge. She was handsomely dark, wore a not too tasteless mixture of fairly smart heterogeneous things, and had a so-called good figure; but all of her was curiously frowsy, after a way I obscurely associated with left-wing enthusiasms in politics and "advanced" banalities in art, although, actually, she cared for neither. Her coily hair-do, on a part-and-bun basis, might have looked feral and bizarre had it not been thoroughly domesticated by its own soft unkemptness at the vulnerable nape. Her fingernails were gaudily painted, but badly bitten and not clean. Her lovers were a silent young photographer with a sudden laugh and two older men, brothers, who owned a small printing establishment across the street. I wondered at their tastes whenever I glimpsed, with a secret shudder, the higgledy-piggledy striation of black hairs that showed all along her pale shins through the nylon of her stockings with the scientific distinctness of a preparation flattened under glass; or when I felt, at her every movement, the dullish, stalish, not particularly conspicuous but all-pervading and depressing emanation that her seldom bathed flesh spread from under weary perfumes and creams.

Her father had gambled away the greater part of a comfortable fortune, and her

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mother's first husband had been of Slav origin, but otherwise Cynthia Vane belonged to a good, respectable family. For aught we know, it may have gone back to kings and soothsayers in the mists of ultimate islands. Transferred to a newer world, to a landscape of doomed, splendid deciduous trees, her ancestry presented, in one of its first phases, a white churchful of farmers against a black thunderhead, and then an imposing array of townsmen engaged in mercantile pursuits, as well as a number of learned men, such as Dr. Jonathan Vane, the gaunt bore (1780–1839), who perished in the conflagration of the steamer "Lexington" to become later an habitué of Cynthia's tilting table. I have always wished to stand genealogy on its head, and here I have an opportunity to do so, for it is the last scion, Cynthia, and Cynthia alone, who will remain of any importance in the Vane dynasty. I am alluding of course to her artistic gift, to her delightful, gay, but not very popular paintings which the friends of her friends bought at long intervals—and I dearly should like to know where they went after her death, those honest and poetical pictures that illumined her living-room—the wonderfully detailed images of metallic things, and my favourite "Seen Through a Windshield"—a windshield partly covered with rime, with a brilliant trickle (from an imaginary car roof) across its transparent part and, through it all, the sapphire flame of the sky and a green and white fir tree.

4

CYNTHIA had a feeling that her dead sister was not altogether pleased with her—had discovered by now that she and I had conspired to break her romance; and so, in order to disarm her shade, Cynthia reverted to a rather primitive type of sacrificial offering (tinged, however, with something of Sybil's humour), and began to send to D.'s business address, at deliberately unfixed dates, such trifles as snapshots of Sybil's tomb in a poor light; cuttings of her own hair which was indistinguishable from Sybil's; a New England sectional map with an inked-in cross, midway between two chaste towns, to mark the spot where D. and Sybil had stopped on October the twenty-third, in broad daylight, at a lenient motel, in a pink and brown forest; and, twice, a stuffed skunk.

Being as a conversationalist more voluble than explicit, she never could describe in full the theory of intervenient auras that she had somehow evolved. Fundamentally there was nothing particularly new about her private creed since it presupposed a fairly conventional hereafter, a silent solarium of immortal souls (spliced with mortal antecedents) whose main recreation consisted of periodical hoverings over the dear quick. The interesting point was a curious practical twist that Cynthia gave to her tame metaphysics. She was sure that her existence was influenced by all sorts of dead friends each of whom took turns in directing her fate much as if she were a stray kitten which a schoolgirl in passing gathers up, and presses to her cheek, and carefully puts down again, near some suburban hedge—to be stroked presently by another transient hand or carried off to a world of doors by some hospitable lady.

For a few hours, or for several days in a row, and sometimes recurrently, in an irregular series, for months or years, anything that happened to Cynthia, after a given person had died, would be, she said, in the manner and mood of that person. The event might be extraordinary, changing the course of one's life; or it might be a string of minute incidents just sufficiently clear to stand out in relief against one's usual day and then shading off into still vaguer trivia as the aura gradually faded. The influence might be good or bad; the main thing was that its source could be identified. It was like walking through a person's soul, she said. I tried to argue that she might not always be able to determine the exact source since not everybody has a recognisable soul; that there are anonymous letters and Christmas presents which anybody might send; that, in fact, what Cynthia called "a usual day" might be itself a weak solution of mixed auras or simply the routine shift of a humdrum

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guardian angel. And what about God? Did or did not people who would resent any omnipotent dictator on earth look forward to one in heaven? And wars? What a dreadful idea—dead soldiers still fighting with living ones, or phantom armies trying to get at each other through the lives of crippled old men.

But Cynthia was above generalities as she was beyond logic. "Ah, that's Paul," she would say when the soup spitefully boiled over, or: "I guess good Betty Brown is dead" —when she won a beautiful and very welcome vacuum cleaner in a charity lottery. And, with Jamesian meanderings that exasperated my French mind, she would go back to a time when Betty and Paul had not yet departed, and tell me of the showers of well-meant, but odd and quite unacceptable bounties—beginning with an old purse that contained a cheque for three dollars which she picked up in the street and, of course, returned (to the aforesaid Betty Brown—this is where she first comes in—a decrepit coloured woman hardly able to walk), and ending with an insulting proposal from an old beau of hers (this is where Paul comes in) to paint "straight" pictures of his house and family for a reasonable remuneration—all of which followed upon the demise of a certain Mrs. Page, a kindly but petty old party who had pestered her with bits of matter-of-fact advice since Cynthia had been a child.

Sybil's personality, she said, had a rainbow edge as if a little out of focus. She said that had I know Sybil better I would have at once understood how Sybil-like was the aura of minor events which, in spells, had suffused her, Cynthia's, existence after Sybil's suicide. Ever since they had lost their mother they had intended to give up their Boston home and move to New York, where Cynthia's paintings, they thought, would have a chance to be more widely admired; but the old home had clung to them with all its plush tentacles. Dead Sybil, however, had proceeded to separate the house from its view—a thing that affects fatally the sense of home. Right across the narrow street a building project had come into loud, ugly, scaffolded life. A pair of familiar poplars died that spring, turning to blond skeletons. Workmen came and broke up the warm-coloured lovely old sidewalk that had a special violet sheen on wet April days and had echoed so memorably to the morning footsteps of museum-bound Mr. Lever, who upon retiring from business at sixty had devoted a full quarter of a century exclusively to the study of snails.

Speaking of old men, one should add that sometimes these posthumous auspices and interventions were in the nature of parody. Cynthia had been on friendly terms with an eccentric librarian called Porlock who in the last years of his dusty life had been engaged in examining old books for miraculous misprints such as the substitution of "l" for the second "h" in the word "hither." Contrary to Cynthia, he cared nothing for the thrill of obscure predictions; all he sought was the freak itself, the chance that mimics choice, the flaw that looks like a flower; and Cynthia, a much more perverse amateur of mis-shapen or illicitly connected words, puns, logogriphs, and so on, had helped the poor crank to pursue a quest that in the light of the example she cited struck me as statistically insane. Anyway, she said, on the third day after his death she was reading a magazine and had just come across a quotation from an imperishable poem (that she, with other gullible readers, believed to have been really composed in a dream) when it dawned upon her that "Alph" was a prophetic sequence of the initial letters of Anna Livia Plurabelle (another sacred river running through, or rather around, yet another fake dream), while the additional "h" modestly stood, as a private signpost, for the word that had so hypnotised Mr. Porlock. And I wish I could recollect that novel or short story (by some contemporary writer, I believe) in which, unknown to its author, the first letters of the words in its last paragraph formed, as deciphered by Cynthia, a message from his dead mother.

5

I am sorry to say that not content with these ingenious fancies Cynthia showed a ridiculous fondness for spiritualism. I refused

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to accompany her to sittings in which paid mediums took part: I knew too much about that from other sources. I did consent, however, to attend little farces rigged up by Cynthia and her two poker-faced gentlemen-friends of the printing shop. They were podgy, polite, and rather eerie old fellows, but I satisfied myself that they possessed considerable wit and culture. We sat down at a light little table, and crackling tremors started almost as soon as we laid our fingertips upon it. I was treated to an assortment of ghosts who rapped out their reports most readily though refusing to elucidate anything that I did not quite catch. Oscar Wilde came in and in rapid garbled French, with the usual anglicisms, obscurely accused Cynthia's dead parents of what appeared in my jottings as *"plagiatisme."* A brisk spirit contributed the unsolicited information that he, John Moore, and his brother Bill had been coal miners in Colorado and had perished in an avalanche at "Crested Beauty" in January 1883. Frederic Myers, an old hand at the game, hammered out a piece of verse (oddly resembling Cynthia's own fugitive productions) which in part reads in my notes:

> *What is this—a conjuror's rabbit,*
> *Or a flawy but genuine gleam—*
> *Which can check the perilous habit*
> *And dispel the dolorous dream?*

Finally, with a great crash and all kinds of shudderings and jig-like movements on the part of the table, Leo Tolstoy visited our little group and, when asked to identify himself by specific traits of terrene habitation, launched upon a complex description of what seemed to be some Russian type of architectural woodwork ("figures on boards—man, horse, cock, man, horse, cock"), all of which was difficult to take down, hard to understand, and impossible to verify.

I attended two or three other sittings which were even sillier but I must confess that I preferred the childish entertainment they afforded and the cider we drank (Podgy and Pudgy were teetotallers) to Cynthia's awful house parties.

She gave them at the Wheelers' nice flat next door—the sort of arrangement dear to her centrifugal nature, but then, of course, her own living-room always looked like a dirty old palette. Following a barbaric, unhygienic, and adulterous custom, the guests' coats, still warm on the inside, were carried by quiet, baldish Bob Wheeler into the sanctity of a tidy bedroom and heaped on the conjugal bed. It was also he who poured out the drinks which were passed around by the young photographer while Cynthia and Mrs. Wheeler took care of the canapés.

A late arrival had the impression of lots of loud people unnecessarily grouped within a smoke-blue space between two mirrors gorged with reflections. Because, I suppose, Cynthia wished to be the youngest in the room, the women she used to invite, married or single, were, at the best, in their precarious forties; some of them would bring from their homes, in dark taxis, intact vestiges of good looks, which, however, they lost as the party progressed. It has always amazed me—the capacity sociable week-end revellers have of finding almost at once, by a purely empiric but very precise method, a common denominator of drunkenness, to which everybody loyally sticks before descending, all together, to the next level. The rich friendliness of the matrons was marked by tomboyish overtones, while the fixed inward look of amiably tight men was like a sacrilegious parody of pregnancy. Although some of the guests were connected in one way or another with the arts, there was no inspired talk, no wreathed, elbow-propped heads, and of course no flute girls. From some vantage point where she had been sitting in a stranded mermaid pose on the pale carpet with one or two younger fellows, Cynthia, her face varnished with a film of beaming sweat, would creep up on her knees, a proffered plate of nuts in one hand, and crisply tap with the other the athletic leg of Cochran or Corcoran, an art dealer, ensconced, on a pearl-grey sofa, between two flushed, happily disintegrating ladies.

At a further stage there would come spurts of more riotous gaiety. Corcoran or Coransky

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would grab Cynthia or some other wandering woman by the shoulder and lead her into a corner to confront her with a grinning embroglio of private jokes and rumours, whereupon, with a laugh and a toss of her head, she would break away. And still later there would be flurries of intersexual chumminess, jocular reconciliations, a bare fleshy arm flung around another woman's husband (he standing very upright in the midst of a swaying room), or a sudden rush of flirtatious anger, of clumsy pursuit—and the quiet half smile of Bob Wheeler picking up glasses that grew like mushrooms in the shade of chairs.

After one last party of that sort, I wrote Cynthia a perfectly harmless and, on the whole, well-meant note, in which I poked a little Latin fun at some of her guests. I also apologised for not having touched her whisky, saying that as a Frenchman I preferred the grape to the grain. A few days later I met her on the steps of the Public Library, in the broken sun, under a weak cloudburst, opening her amber umbrella, struggling with a couple of armpitted books (of which I relieved her for a moment). "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World," by Robert Dale Owen, and something on "Spiritualism and Christianity"; when, suddenly, with no provocation on my part, she blazed out at me with vulgar vehemence, using poisonous words, saying—through pear-shaped drops of sparse rain—that I was a prig and a snob; that I only saw the gestures and disguises of people; that Corcoran had rescued from drowning, in two different oceans, two men —by an irrelevant coincidence both called Corcoran; that romping and screeching Joan Winter had a little girl doomed to grow completely blind in a few months; and that the woman in green with the freckled chest whom I had snubbed in some way or other had written a national best-seller in 1932. Strange Cynthia! I had been told she could be thunderously rude to people whom she liked and respected; one had, however, to draw the line somewhere and since I had by then sufficiently studied her interesting auras and other odds and ids, I decided to stop seeing her altogether.

6

THE NIGHT D. informed me of Cynthia's death I returned after eleven to the two-storeyed house I shared, in horizontal section, with an emeritus professor's widow. Upon reaching the porch I looked with the apprehension of solitude at the two kinds of darkness in the two rows of windows: the darkness of absence and the darkness of sleep.

I could do something about the first but could not duplicate the second. My bed gave me no sense of safety; its springs only made my nerves bounce. I plunged into Shakespeare's sonnets—and found myself idiotically checking the first letters of the lines to see what sacramental words they might form. I got FATE (LXX), ATOM (CXX) and, twice, TAFT (LXXXVIII, CXXXI). Every now and then I would glance around to see how the objects in my room were behaving. It was strange to think that if bombs began to fall I would feel little more than a gambler's excitement (and a great deal of earthy relief) whereas my heart would burst if a certain suspiciously tense-looking little bottle on yonder shelf moved a fraction of an inch to one side. The silence, too, was suspiciously compact as if deliberately forming a black back-drop for the nerve flash caused by any small sound of unknown origin. All traffic was dead. In vain did I pray for the groan of a truck up Perkins Street. The woman above who used to drive me crazy by the booming thuds occasioned by what seemed monstrous feet of stone (actually, in diurnal life, she was a small dumpy creature resembling a mummified guinea pig) would have earned my blessings had she now trudged to her bathroom. I put out my light and cleared my throat several times so as to be responsible for at least *that* sound. I thumbed a mental ride with a very remote automobile but it dropped me before I had a chance to doze off. Presently a crackle (due, I hoped, to a discarded and crushed sheet of paper opening like a mean, stubborn night flower)—started and stopped in the waste-paper basket, and my bed-table responded with a little click. It would have

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been just like Cynthia to put on right then a cheap poltergeist show.

I decided to fight Cynthia. I reviewed in thought the modern era of raps and apparitions, beginning with the knockings of 1848, at the hamlet of Hydesville, N.Y., and ending with grotesque phenomena at Cambridge, Mass.; I evoked the ankle-bones and other anatomical castanets of the Fox sisters (as described by the sages of the University of Buffalo); the mysteriously uniform type of delicate adolescent in bleak Epworth or Tedworth, radiating the same disturbances as in old Peru; solemn Victorian orgies with roses falling and accordions floating to the strains of sacred music; professional imposters regurgitating moist cheesecloth; Mr. Duncan, a lady medium's dignified husband, who, when asked if he would submit to a search, excused himself on the ground of soiled underwear; old Alfred Russel Wallace, the naïve naturalist, refusing to believe that the white form with bare feet and unperforated earlobes before him, at a private pandemonium in Boston, could be prim Miss Cook whom he had just seen asleep, in her curtained corner, all dressed in black, wearing laced-up boots and earrings; two other investigators, small, puny, but reasonably intelligent and active men, closely clinging with arms and legs about Eusapia, a large, plump elderly female reeking of garlic, who still managed to fool them; and the sceptical and embarrassed magician, instructed by charming young Margery's "control" not to get lost in the bathrobe's lining but to follow up the left stocking until he reached the bare thigh—upon the warm skin of which he felt a "teleplastic" mass that appeared to the touch uncommonly like cold, uncooked liver.

7

I WAS appealing to flesh, and the corruption of flesh, to refute and defeat the possible persistence of discarnate life. Alas, these conjurations only enhanced my fear of Cynthia's phantom. Atavistic peace came with dawn, and when I slipped into sleep, the sun through the tawny window shades penetrated a dream that somehow was full of Cynthia.

This was disappointing. Secure in the fortress of daylight, I said to myself that I had expected more. She, a painter of glass-bright minutiæ—and now so vague! I lay in bed, thinking my dream over and listening to the sparrows outside: Who knows, if recorded and then run backward, those bird sounds might not become human speech, voiced words, just as the latter become a twitter when reversed? I set myself to re-read my dream—backward, diagonally, up, down—trying hard to unravel something Cynthia-like in it, something strange and suggestive that must be there.

I could isolate, consciously, little. Everything seemed blurred, yellow-clouded, yielding nothing tangible. Her inept acrostics, maudlin evasions, theopathies—every recollection formed ripples of mysterious meaning. Everything seemed yellowly blurred, illusive, lost.

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## SHORT STORY COMPETITION

An announcement about our Authors' and Translators' Story Competition, which closed on October 31st, will be made in our next issue. The judges were Graham Greene, Stephen Spender, Angus Wilson, and Gerard Hopkins. Two hundred and seven entries were received, including translations from twenty-eight languages.

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*R. H. S. Crossman*

# Chinese Notebook

**Moscow to Peking**

AFTER a very good dinner my friend Z from the Russian Foreign Office motored me out to Moscow airport. I mentioned the feeling I had got, walking through the Agricultural Exhibition that the centre of the world was moving eastwards and had now reached Moscow. As the Peking flight was called through the loudspeaker, he said to me, with his broad, bland smile, "Good-bye, my dear fellow, and maybe, when you return in three weeks' time, the centre of the world will have moved further eastwards—to Peking." At the time, I didn't appreciate this remark at its full value. After a fortnight in Moscow, the Soviet Union seemed to me a place of endless frustrations, and I still regarded the Russians I had met as stiff and remote. It is only in Peking that one comes to regard Moscow as a neighbour to London, and appreciates the Russian Communist as "a Westerner"—who can even dare to make a joke.

Seen from outside, the TU 104 is an exquisite aeroplane. But it is not unusually comfortable within and provides virtually no service and very poor meals. Every time it takes off, it moves slowly along the enormous runway. Then, about half-way along, it clutches itself and starts making an effort, just succeeding in getting a few feet off the ground a hundred yards before the tarmac ends. The descent is equally dramatic. You hit the ground with a resounding bump. Then the brakes go on, everything flies off the table in front of you, and your stomach retches as the plane stops with a shriek. The TU 104 is, of course, a converted bomber, although, unlike our civil aeroplanes, it has immense roomy windows, which you can really see out of. I sat by one of them—which had the disadvantage that after two hours it got so hot underfoot that the heat of the metal bored through the thick sole of my shoe. I never felt really comfortable.

My plane left at midnight and I woke up just before sunrise. We were flying over a vast city on both sides of a great river. It was Omsk, where we were forbidden to leave the airstrip during refuelling and stamped our feet while all round us Migs were taking off. From there it was lovely weather right to Irkutsk, 3½ hours away, where we turned south-east over Lake Baikal and the Gobi Desert, which looked just what the Gobi Desert should look like—pale mauve stretches of limitless sand. As we were moving towards the mountains, we ran into a cloud patch and suddenly we were over the Chinese frontier and I was peering down at a countryside patterned with towns and villages and roads linking them and great rivers sweeping through close cultivation, and everything tender green, like a bamboo shoot. Though it was only 11 by my watch, the sun was down on the horizon, because we had just flown through one night, telescoped a day, and arrived in the late afternoon.

ON THE TARMAC I could see hundreds of young people waving tiny flags, holding bouquets, and cheering wildly. This (I learnt afterwards) was the reception for the score of delegates to the international student conference, who were on the plane. The only person to greet me as I stepped out was M. from the British Chargé d'Affaires' office. Then a reception committee from my hosts, the Institute of Foreign Affairs, turned up. It was a modest affair—without flags or flowers—consisting of Mr. Wu, the Assistant Secretary of the Institute; Mr. Pan, the interpreter; and a certain Dr. Sun, a tiny, tight little man with a tiny, tight little pipe. At first



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they mistook M. for a fellow traveller from Moscow, but as soon as they discovered who he was they did not bother to disguise their hostility. Obviously I was expected, as their guest, to keep clear of the British Embassy and, equally obviously, I could not oblige. The best thing was to make this clear as soon as possible. So, once I had made sure that the Institute had nothing arranged for that evening, I accepted an invitation to dinner at the Embassy. My Chinese hosts drove me twenty miles into town and left me to unpack in a fifth-floor room of the Peking Hotel, with a terrace looking over the Forbidden City to the northern mountain ring.

THE EMBASSY LIES DOWN A leafy avenue just across the street from my hotel. Strolling to it through the sweltering night, I found every inch of the hundred-yard compound wall plastered from top to bottom with tattered posters and streamers. They had been attached during the 36-hour demonstration at the height of the Lebanon crisis, and they were still there because, for reasons of face, neither the British nor the Chinese would clean them off. Over dinner I was given a fill-in on the situation. My arrival had coincided with a new anti-British agitation, which filled the front page of the newspapers day after day with fresh "revelations" about the closure of a Chinese school in Hongkong; and, as we sat in the garden after dinner, I could hear another spate of demonstrators swirling round the compound, while from the other side came the raucous noise of a film being shown in the Russian Embassy. "We think they are just filling-in with this Hongkong affair," said M., "while they are working up another row about the offshore islands." His guess proved right.

**Four Correct Answers**

THIS afternoon Dr. Sun took me to the Exhibition, the first of many that I was to see, since every town I visited was demonstrating what it had achieved in the "Great Leap Forward." There were examples of every kind of product, from railway points and heavy machinery to sponge bags and thermos flasks. To my horror, I discovered that I was supposed to stand for a moment before each exhibit and listen to the pat speech of a little demonstrator. I don't know how many of these demonstrators there were in Peking, but in Changchung, which is a much smaller place, I was told that there were 2,000 of them. They had been detailed from the factories and universities for the three months of the exhibition and worked a six-day week from 8 till 7.

It was a sweltering day, and after an hour I found it impossible to pay attention to the translation of the set speeches, owing to the crowds pressing around me. I never got used to the fact that, wherever I went, within five minutes there were at least a hundred people standing round, laughing cheerfully at me. In China crowds rise like mists out of a marsh, and dissipate themselves in the same mysterious way. Soon I had had enough and begged Dr. Sun to take me, as he had promised, to the Temple of Heavenly Peace.

This was by far the most beautiful building I saw in China—a slim, stone, half-mile long enclosure, with, at one end, steps leading up to a superb round temple with a deep blue roof, and, at the other end, a smaller elevated temple, this time open to the air and of the greatest delicacy. On the terrace between the temples, thousands of troops were practising a formal march-past. They had been there a fortnight when I saw them and had five weeks more to go before National Day. I couldn't resist expressing my admiration for the perfectly matched rows of superbly fit young men, slapping the ground in the goose-step.

"This is a wonderful symbol," I said to Dr. Sun. "The youth of the new China goose-stepping in the old China's Temple of Heavenly Peace!"

"They are not doing the goose-step!" Dr. Sun replied indignantly.

"Well, what is it?" I asked. "If you didn't learn it from Chiang Kai-shek's German Generals, did it come from the Russians?"

Dr. Sun was furious with me and tried to drag me away. I said that, on this perfect, sunny afternoon, I wanted to sit on the balustrade watching the soldiers. Only later did I learn that, in Communist China, a soldier is something you walk away from as fast as you can, for fear of being accused of improper curiosity. At the time, I thought Dr. Sun was merely angry with me. I now realise that he was also scared of being rebuked for my suspicious behaviour.

IN THE EVENING I was the guest of honour at a dinner presided over by the President of the Institute, Chang Shi-jo, a personal friend of Mao; the Vice-Chairman, Chi Chow-ding, an-

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other highly influential personality; and the Vice-President of Peking University. After we had eaten course after course for an hour and a half, the President called us to order and formally started a political discussion by asking me to analyse the Mid-East situation. I said I would sharply distinguish this Anglo-American intervention from Suez. Suez was a clear act of aggression, whereas the intervention in Lebanon and Jordan was not.

The President: "That is a purely formal distinction! Of course it was an act of aggression!"

"Even when one Government requests an ally to send troops to help in suppressing trouble?"

"Yes, of course."

"Well, then, what about Hungary?"

"That was totally different. Hungary was a victim of American aggression and the Russians came to the assistance of their Socialist allies."

"All right. I won't argue about terms. But, if the Americans were able to succeed so sensationally in winning over a large element of the Hungarian people to their 'aggressive' designs, does this not connote failure by the Hungarian Government?"

At this point a keen-faced young man, who had not so far spoken, broke in. "I will give you the four correct answers to your question," he said. "Firstly, the Hungarian Government failed by being too lenient to these counter-revolutionaries. They should have been merciless and they were not. Secondly, it failed in the task of re-educating the intellectuals. Rectification is what they required, and it was not done thoroughly. Thirdly, the sheer existence of an organisation like the Petöfi Club was an insult to Communism. It should have been liquidated totally. Fourthly, there was nothing wrong with the policy of the Hungarian Government. Its failures were administrative."

"I am most grateful for that precise answer. Could we now agree at least on this? In Hungary, Russia intervened vigorously and effectively to support her friends. America intervened ineffectively to support hers. If America's intervention had been as vigorous as Russian intervention, there would have been a world war. So we can be grateful it was not as vigorous."

The President: "That is not an interpretation we accept. The only reason why American intervention was unsuccessful was the weakness of decadent imperialism. Any suggestion that the Americans could have intervened effectively and failed to do so in order to avoid a world war is unjustifiable. They were defeated because they were decadent. Russia is on the side of the future and looks after her allies."

By now it was nearly 10 and I had been warned that the Chinese go to bed early. "Well, there are a whole number of questions I want to ask you, Mr. President," I said, "but we shall be seeing each other often, so I will reserve my queries for another evening." Actually that was the one and only meal given in my honour by the Institute. I never had a chance of asking Chang Shi-jo those questions.

**Monumental dairy**

Spent this morning at a State farm near Peking. The dairy buildings were quite magnificent. I pointed out that they were far better than the buildings for the human beings. "Yes," replied Mr. Fang, "they are far too ostentatious. We wouldn't build them like that to-day." I frequently heard criticisms of the "monumental" building which the Russian experts had done, and which the Chinese are now cutting down to their Puritan taste. In this "monumental" dairy I found that nothing but artificial insemination is used (although the farm has its own bulls). A.I., I was told, "is more progressive." ... But I later discovered that the Chinese regard butter and milk as rather disgusting things. They themselves cook with soya bean oil, and do not wean their children until milk can be dispensed with altogether. This farm must have been kept chiefly to provide milk for foreigners in Peking.

**Room of Their Own**

TO-DAY I visited an ultra-modern textile mill, complete with its workers' quarters, canteens, schools, kindergartens, and crèches. Such visits, I find, usually teach me very little, but on this occasion, just when I had decided to go home for lunch, I struck lucky.

"What is that building?" I asked, and was told, "A dormitory." Unheedful of my guide's protests, I walked upstairs and opened a door. It was a girls' dormitory into which I had unwittingly forced my way. The Director had told me there were four persons to each dormitory. Here there were four double bunks, end to end, filling the whole room except for a very narrow passage. This was the total living quarters for eight girls. It was scrupulously clean. Where

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they kept their clothes I still don't know, but they had made themselves little bed-curtains. Soon I was established, sitting on one of the beds, with seven of the girls around me, and we had an hour's delightful conversation, over half of it consisting of Chinese laughter. At least in conversation with foreigners, laughter plays a much more important part in Chinese than it does in English. There are many different kinds of laugh, and I could never be sure which was being used. However, on this occasion it seemed to be the laugh appreciative.

I learnt that none of the girls had any ambition outside the factory. Their aim was to marry a fellow-worker and go on living there for ever. Their ages varied from 17 to 24 and it was the 24-year-old who led the conversation—a serious girl, engaged for more than two years but still saving up for marriage. Trying to find some flaw in their contentment, I asked them about the Government's decision temporarily to stop annual holidays with pay. This didn't matter, the girls said in chorus, and one of them explained that anyone with a family outside Peking can claim 20-30 days' leave in order to visit her parents.

"But that means that those of you who by bad luck are Pekingers never get a holiday!" "But what should we do on a holiday? If we don't go back to our parents we like to work in the factory. We are happy here." By Chinese standards, this room for eight was a paradise. Of course, to obtain this privilege a worker must forfeit most of his freedom. For all new housing in China is built for new offices or factories, so no one can change his job without losing his accommodation. None of this, however, seemed to worry these seven girls, laughing and plying me with hot water from their thermos.

### The Differences

I HAVE now spent a rather desultory week in Peking. With a crisis blowing up over Quemoy, I am becoming something of an embarrassment to my hosts, who are unwilling or unable to obtain for me any of the interviews with politicians or writers for which I have asked. However, this leaves me plenty of time for random sight-seeing. Here are some first impressions that I jotted down.

WHAT HAS MOST SURPRISED ME in the streets has been the hoardings. Everywhere you go in Peking, gigantic posters stare down at you—stately Arabs and Russians kicking, bayoneting, or otherwise maltreating squat dwarfs, or slaying scaly dragons with the Stars and Stripes (or the Union Jack) painted across their stomachs. I had always thought of "Imperialists" as great, brutal creatures, and of colonial peoples as undersized. On these Chinese posters the dimensions are strangely reversed. The "Imperialists" are ignoble and small, and the oppressed peoples glorious giants. Not all the hoardings, however, are political. A number advertise household goods. And what a surprise it is to find that the way to flatter the girls of the New China into buying soap is to make them look pink and white and Western! Were it not for the slightly elongated eyes, the beauties who smile down at you might be Southern belles! Anti-Americanism, apparently, does not extend to styles of beauty.

SOME OF THE TRIVIAL, BAFFLING DIFFERENCES between China and Russia which I have noticed: In Moscow there is no telephone directory, and you spend a lot of your time swopping useful numbers, like postage stamps. The idea that this is due to "Communist secretiveness" is exploded by the existence of a normal printed telephone directory in Peking. Differences in censorship are equally baffling. The four columns I sent home from Moscow were all submitted to an elaborate censorship procedure, and three of them were brutally slashed. In Peking I was at once given a card which granted me completely uncensored cable rights. Tipping: In the National Hotel in Moscow, no one refused a tip or did much without one. In the Peking Hotel, it was at once made clear that no service was too much trouble, and no tip could be accepted in a Socialist State.

Perhaps this was part of that larger contrast between Chinese and Russian behaviour, which constrains the Russians in Peking to share their miseries even with the British! Moscow seemed to me to have the standards of our Victorian age—the lewd vices as well as the family virtues, the drunkenness and profligacy as well as the respect for solid success. In Peking you are transported two hundred years further back—to the Puritanism of *Paradise Lost* and the mixture of bigotry and emancipation of the Putney Dialogues. Not merely prostitution has been cleaned up, but drunkenness and adultery as well. Watching a pair of Chinese lovers as they

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sit a foot away from each other on a park bench, or taking part in a Chinese banquet, I can understand how inhibited the Russian experts feel. For Chinese Puritanism is applied to the pleasures of foreigners as well. When, for instance, a demure secretary from the British Embassy spent three hours typing for me in my room, we were never left more than twenty minutes without an interruption by one of the servants, to make sure that we were not enjoying ourselves too much. Normally, nothing will induce a Chinese to criticise the Russians, but on the subject of drink and sex this self-restraint breaks down. Twice already the licentiousness of the Russians has been admitted to me, but each time with the heated excuse that "it takes some time to eradicate the ingrown habits of decadent capitalism."

### Of Trees and Carborundum

WOKE AT 5 and caught the 7 a.m. plane to Mukden, a nice little Convair, with room for eight passengers, apart from the post. We flew over the mountains to the vast plain of Manchuria, and as we came down upon Mukden the first impression (a very misleading one) was of neatness, order, and planning. Actually it's a terribly dreary place, a piece of the Japanese industrial revolution. An *Intourist* clerk met me and I was left in a hotel room for an hour while my new interpreter, Mr. Liu, tried to find somebody in the Public Relations Office to show me round.

After a long delay I was taken to see a workers' suburb, housing 60,000 people, which had been built by the pooled efforts of eighty factories. Here the housing manager told me that his first aim was to substitute one family for the usual two families per room. What he had to show me were gaunt brick barracks, ironically similar to the tenements constructed under British capitalism a hundred years ago. In twenty-five years' time, what Mukden will have is a system of tied slums.

At lunch I mentioned that I didn't only want to see big new Russian factories and would like to visit one of the smaller units, newly encouraged in the Leap Forward. To my astonishment, this request was at once granted, and we set off by car through the south side of Mukden. Soon we were off the main road, among shanties, twisting and turning on open mud through houses with no sanitation but sometimes with electric light—an incredible jumble, mixed up with gardens and factories. Finally we reached an open yard, and, as I got out, a man grasped my hand and said (in broad American), "I am Mr. Young, and this is Young's Carborundum Factory. Already in our first year we are producing a finer quality than England."

Carborundum is a powder, made of tiny grains so hard that it can be used for grinding lenses. Here is the process I saw. In the middle of the yard they had set up a furnace, in which the original powder was heated up until it formed into a kind of granite rock. It was then taken out of the furnace and the rock hammered to pieces by men with long hammers. Then the fragments were sieved. I shall not forget the room, with no windows and some twenty people sitting holding sieves, hung on string from the ceiling, leaning backwards and forwards as they sieved by hand. The powder which went through the sieve was then transferred to an extraordinary sort of bathroom. There were four wooden steps and on each a pot, the size of an Ali-Baba pot, full of water, which was being moved, basinful by basinful, higher and higher from platform to platform by charming girls. The point of this operation was to get the powder to settle at the bottom of the water. Then it was dried, and in the next room there were girls with large magnets, extracting the grains of iron from the powder before it was packed in neat green boxes.

I suspect this is how we made carborundum in 1750.

Of course, there was no protection against silicosis, but the place was teeming with enthusiasm. At the back of the factory I saw 200 people squatting on their haunches. "What is that?" I asked. "That is the morning shift discussing how to improve production."

THIS WAS MY FIRST SIGHT of the other kind of industrial revolution going on in China. At one end you have these enormous modern factories, constructed by the Russians in exact imitation of modern Western capitalism. At the other end of the scale you have thousands of these small factories, using incredibly primitive methods of industrialisation and able to succeed because of the vast quantities of surplus labour available, labour in such supply that you can afford to be inefficient.

On returning to the hotel, I found a member

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of the Town Planning Department of the Municipality waiting for a talk. Not knowing how to start, I mentioned the new tree-planting I had seen and said what a difference this makes to dreary industrial towns. "Yes," came the reply, "we planted fourteen million trees on April 5th." I looked incredulous and was then informed that there are two million inhabitants of Mukden and each was instructed to plant seven trees one Sunday. Each family drew its allocation from its street committee, and that was that.

**The Lie**

CHANGCHUNG used to be the capital of the Japanese puppet Emperor and is now noted for its gigantic new motor works, constructed to Russian specifications and producing at present a four-ton Russian lorry. I was visiting the engine assembly plant when I rounded a corner and there were twelve workers playing cards. When I asked why, I was told, "We finished our stint two hours before the end of the shift." I sat down, and asked questions. After a time I said, "You ask me now." One worker said, "How many members of the family can the British wage support?" Finding this difficult to answer, I explained the kind of homes motor-car workers in Coventry have, whereupon someone else said, "We know your workers have higher wages when in work, but they are subject to mass unemployment." I said this had not been true in Coventry since 1940, and we had a long discussion about employment in Britain, the right to strike, and so on. I had found it a very pleasant conversation, but as we drove away Mr. Liu, my interpreter, said to me, "I hope you realise those workers didn't believe a single word you said. After all, we have correct information in China about Britain, coming from real British workers."

I was very angry and said, "I don't mind what they think, but I do mind what you, Mr. Liu, think. You are supposed to be my interpreter, but you call me a liar to my face."

"But I was only telling you the truth," he replied. "Didn't you see the look of incredulity on their faces? It would be discourteous of me not to tell you what it meant."

"And are you also incredulous?" To which he replied, "As a Communist, I know that you were talking nonsense about unemployment in Britain."

TO-DAY I RAN INTO some two hundred young demonstrators doing nothing; they all came round me, and we held a little seminar. They were in their third year in Physics and were spending half their time on manual labour. All of them, earlier in the season, had helped "defeat the drought." There was also an economist in his fourth year, who had spent six months teaching villagers. I said, "Wasn't this a pity when you were at University?"

A girl replied, "We all want to be workers. It's bourgeois to care about money."

"But at the motor-car works yesterday I learnt that the chief engineer gets 300 Yuan and the unskilled worker 60. So it looks as if these workers care about money!"

"Those are the older people. We young ones are different."

I asked the physicists about nuclear weapons, and they all told me that China would have them very soon. I remarked that some students in Britain had a conscience about making nuclear weapons. They said that was quite right, because Britain was capitalist.

"In this exhibition you are always talking about surpassing Britain. That's fine. But is it your aim to surpass us not merely in production but in welfare too?"

Answer from economist: "We shall do it. It is time you abolished your slums."

"What about the Chinese slums?"

"They have been abolished. Now there are only some bad housing conditions."

RETURNED TO TIENTSIN to-day, immensely exhilarated by my first experience of a People's Commune. I can hardly remember anything being said to me which was particularly ideological or argumentative; that was what made my return to town such a sharp contrast. For here I was once again fighting the usual intellectual duel. Never for one moment, throughout lunch, did Mr. Fang relent in his exposure of the decadence of Western capitalism, and he finally goaded me into counter-attack by repeatedly referring to "the Russian defeat of Hitler." "Don't you attribute any rôle to Britain?" "Well, after all, it was the Red Army that defeated Hitler." "What about the year when Britain fought alone?" "But the real defeat of the Germans was by Russia. Moreover, Russia is the home of Socialism and must at all costs be preserved." "You mean that it would not have upset you if Britain had been destroyed

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by Hitler?" "Russia is the home of Socialism and Britain is not."

**A Moment of Freedom**

LAST NIGHT that ghastly train wireless was for once worth having. We had just settled down in the train from Tientsin to Peking, when the music broke off and my interpreter, Mr. Liu, said, "This is a tremendous announcement." What we heard was Chou En-lai's offer to negotiate with Dulles. First came Chou En-lai's six points, then Dulles's eight points, then Chou's six points, followed by martial music. Of the people in our long compartment, the youths in front of us took no interest whatsoever and went on playing cards. A father and mother next door to me were far too busy with their three children; but the two old men behind me listened intently. I remarked on this to Liu, who said, "Don't be misled. It was the same when we went into Korea to repel the Americans. Apparently there was no interest at all. The Chinese are not very expressive at such times of crisis." On reflection, I don't really believe Liu. I suspect these people were all ostentatiously showing no interest in what was being deliberately put over as a great official pronouncement on policy.

We arrived in Peking in a thunderstorm, but already the demonstrations in favour of Chou En-lai's statement had started and for the next two hours, in spite of the drenching rain, people were marching and shouting all round the hotel. It doesn't take long for the street committees to get busy in this city.

I WAS WAKENED BEFORE SEVEN this morning by the noise of the demonstration, which had started up again. By nine o'clock it was almost continuous. Mr. Pan called up to ask if I still wanted to make my expedition to the Great Wall. (Before I left for Manchuria I had insisted, against the advice of the Institute, that I must see the Great Wall, and this Sunday was the day fixed.) I replied that I would like to postpone starting till 11.30. The anti-Western atmosphere was so thick that my Britishness had been stirred and I had decided to go to Chapel at the British Embassy (and, incidentally, to have a talk with D. and get the news). So I boldly broke through the demonstrators marching past my hotel and strolled down into the compound on a sweltering hot day, already at 10 o'clock well over 100 in the shade, and took part in a ritual which made me feel like one of the defenders of Lucknow. Here we all were, some sixty of us in a Victorian chapel, with Victorian brasses, singing Victorian hymns, just to prove that we were British among the infidels. (D. told me he was deeply moved by my turning up in my best Sunday suit.)

Afterwards I went back to D.'s room, read the text of Chou in English and asked what it meant. D. and M. told me that their first impression was that this was a peace overture, if not a climb-down, and meant that the Chinese were not going to use force against Quemoy.

Back at the hotel, Mr. Pan rang again to announce that there was going to be a great demonstration. Didn't I want to cancel going to the Great Wall? I said I would not go to the demonstration alone, and very reluctantly he agreed to accompany me and then to proceed to the Great Wall afterwards. At 12.30 precisely Mr. Pan and I walked out of the hotel into the prickly heat. The hotel stands on a huge street, only half a mile from the main square. By now the stream of demonstrators, with their flags and their bands, was virtually unbroken. We walked quietly down the shady sidewalk and right across the square; one could observe the precise military organisation with which places were marked and groups were proceeding to them. I also noticed that each team leader had a piece of paper in his hand, and Mr. Pan admitted that it contained the day's slogans. I couldn't help thinking of the plight of the early starters, who had been marching since six and would be sitting in the blazing sun till five.

I FOUND A COOL SPOT under a tree, right by the central square, with a perfect view of the rostrum and the stands, where the important guests were beginning to file in. What struck me was the absence of spectators standing along the streets and of people on the sidewalks. But then everybody was demonstrating, and nobody was looking on. Under my tree I soon gathered (despite Mr. Pan's agonised protests) a crowd around for questioning. Soon there must have been several hundred Chinese. A very jolly gathering. Nobody was afraid to talk or seemed at all hostile.

"Why doesn't your Government protest against the Americans?" I replied that the best way to influence an ally was not to shout at him in public but to plead with him in private. This



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got a surprisingly good reception, so I countered by asking what would happen if war actually came. For a long time there was only the reply that war could not come, because the Americans have no right to be on Formosa or the offshore islands, and they must therefore be persuaded to withdraw.

"And if they do not withdraw?" "They will be driven out. After all, the United States is a paper tiger." I expressed scepticism, at which an engineering student said, "It is the Americans, not us, who should be afraid of war," and a sergeant added, "We licked them when they backed Chiang Kai-shek against us in our war of liberation. We licked them again in Korea." At this point, I said I wanted to ask them a very serious question indeed. If they were right and the Americans were such bad soldiers, I asked, would they not resort to nuclear weapons? "What would a Chinese victory be worth to the millions of Chinese dead?" When this had been translated, there was a pause. Then the whole crowd burst into a peal of the merriest laughter. An old man, squatting beside me, said, "Do you really suppose we are scared by that sort of talk?"

By now, more than three-quarters of the million demonstrators had already arrived in the square, and I had had enough of it. Escaping for an afternoon's peaceful meditation on the Great Wall, I was not to be alone: little Dr. Sun had decided to accompany me. Good-bye to tranquillity! Within a few minutes we were bickering.

"What do you think of Chou En-lai's statement?"

"I am here to listen and not to give you my views, which couldn't matter less. That is why I have been asking you, day after day, to be allowed to have an interview with someone in the Foreign Office or even with the Foreign Secretary."

"Everybody is busy. No one has time to give interviews now."

"What is the point of my coming all this way if I can meet no one in the Foreign Office, no leading politicians. No writers or authors?"

"But you see me."

By this time we had reached the Great Wall, without noticing the country through which we had been driving. At once we set off, walking along (or, rather, up) it; it's very steep and very rough. I had heard so much about the virtues of manual labour and physical prowess and I said to Dr. Sun and Mr. Pan, "I will race you to the top." Very soon they gave up. I found myself at least a mile and a half away from anyone—for the first and for the last time in China. A lovely, exhilarating moment. I pressed along the top of the Wall, uphill, downhill, and uphill again, until Dr. Sun and Mr. Pan were only tiny spots. Then I scrambled down and walked back through the grass at the base, picking wild flowers, feeling easy and happy.

I soon lapsed again from grace. I couldn't resist saying to Dr. Sun, "Thank you for forty minutes of freedom, which I will always remember." Then we climbed back into the car. I turned the conversation to the morning's demonstration. "Why did they laugh at me?" I asked. Sun replied, "Because there are some questions so absurd that they only deserve laughter as an answer."

The demonstration had finished when we got back to Peking. Since (as usual) there was nothing arranged for the evening, I went to dinner with D. at the Embassy. We discussed my plight, and he told me that the Chinese regularly kept their foreign guests hanging round, and everything would probably come right on the last day, when I would see everybody, including Chou En-lai. I didn't believe it.

We left Peking by sleeper. Once again there was the long, long queue, squatting first outside the station, then inside the waiting-rooms, and finally on the platforms. Once again: how carefully the foreigner's special travel pass is checked. Mr. Liu said tactfully, "It is so much more convenient for you not to have your passport with you. That is why we have this special pass." Actually, of course, the passport gave me no right to travel, and my special pass was looked at several times on each railway station (as well as by the police who frequent every train). The train itself was the usual roomy Chinese sleeper. There are four people in each compartment, but the beds are wide and there is a nice big table under the window, on which to put one's tea-mug, which is filled all the time with fresh hot water from the thermos. A loudspeaker blares in each compartment. I never discovered how to turn it off.

Out of the window was Honan Province, with a blue range of mountains on our right, and about ten we were slowly steam-

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ing across the Yellow River—vast stretches of orange sand, with evil-looking, reddish water swirling and curling and, a mile down river, another huge bridge under construction.

From Chengchow station we motored to a magnificent stone building, not a hotel but a hostel for "visiting technicians." I was given a sitting-room, bedroom, and big bathroom. The Russians are not uncomfortable in China. I faced with passive equanimity the dreadful prospect of another Exhibition.

Actually, this was a not uninteresting experience. In each of the halls there were, on one side, huge boards with propaganda statistics and, on the other side, sheaves of prize wheat and samples of the grain. As usual, there were scores of little demonstrators, ready with their set lectures. The first girl took me to her board, which compared the rate of increase in wheat production in Honan in 1957–58 with that in other countries in 1956–57. Here is how it read:

> Honan 141 per cent, Turkey 33 per cent, Denmark 15.3 per cent, France 13.9 per cent, U.S.A. 7.6 per cent, Britain 0.5 per cent, Japan –2.5 per cent, India –2.7 per cent, Italy –9.3 per cent, Canada –29.3 per cent, Australia –37.1 per cent.

"You see the failure of British production," the demonstrator said to me severely. "At this rate it will take you two hundred years to catch up with Honan Province."

### The Communes

TO-DAY I have seen two People's Communes, one urban and one rural. The morning started at a textile machinery factory. The director, who took us round, was not an engineer but a Party worker, but the more I saw of him the more impressed I was by his relations with the workers. The factory was built in 1949 to Russian design, and is equipped with Russian, Czech, German, American, and Chinese machinery. It produces the machines for cleaning cotton and for printing and dyeing. The director told me he started with 500 skilled men, drawn from elsewhere, and now has 1,600. Illiterates are still accepted for the three-year apprenticeship at the age of eighteen. To my surprise, I found there was a weekly wage and only a small incentive bonus, less than 15 per cent of earnings. "The work is interesting here," he said. "We do not require too much incentive."

After this I was taken to see how the wives of the workers are contributing to the "Great Leap Forward." At one end of the workers' barrack, two houses have been commandeered for a paper-mill (which was turning waste paper into toilet paper). First of all, the waste was put into a bath and pulped, then mashed in the open air, with an old cow going round and round the wheel, then stretched in another bath on bamboo, and finally stuck on the wall to dry After that it was toilet paper. I talked to the six women who had started it. They told me they were going to take no pay for two months in order to get the factory going, but what they would not tell me was the fate of the people who lived in the rooms they had taken over.

We did the usual inspection of the workers' barracks, the kindergarten, the primary school, and the hospital. Then I discovered I was visiting a "People's Commune"! The director was very scornful of the change. "It makes no difference," he said, "just another damn committee with me as Chairman and the Secretary of the Trade Union as Deputy." Nevertheless, there was a difference. The establishment of the People's Commune had ended all house-ownership and nationalised all small shops.

During the course of the morning I asked about the afternoon expedition, and was told that I was to see "a vegetable co-op. in the suburbs." I insisted that they must be able to find a Commune which was really rural. "After all," I added, "your Public Relations Office is Provincial, not Municipal." Administrative argument of this sort impresses in China. At lunch I had a sense of wild elation when I was told we would visit a "People's Commune" twenty kilometres out of town. It didn't sound very far, but at least it wasn't a suburban market garden.

Off we drove, past the great new power station, and as soon as we turned off the main road we were bang in the middle of the country, another world, bouncing over perilous wooden bridges and pounding across endless low fields of cotton and maize. A right turn again, and we were ploughing through a dangerous mixture of sand and swamp. The car jammed deep in the mud, and every time it started up the mud spurted out twenty yards behind. We should have had to push. But, as usual, out of the emptiness a crowd materialised. This time it was some fifty children. With squeals of excitement, they pushed our car until all of them were yellow and blue with mud. We passed

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through a strange mud-walled village with tumble-down houses and lagoons under trees. On and on, through low cotton and maize, and now we were hooting our way through quite a formidable walled town, with its own gateway.

At last we drew up inside the village of Kooshing. It may be only twenty kilometres from Chengchow, but it has taken us fifty-five minutes of hard motoring, and we might as well be in the middle of Central Africa. We were received in an extremely efficient office, a modern, beautifully thatched building (which I found later was a reconstructed Christian church). My host was the Deputy Director, a forty-year-old, ultra-competent, ex-illiterate peasant. Down we sat at table with our mugs of tea. He took his notebooks out and gave me an extremely able resumé:

> The People's Commune had been formed a fortnight before by merging the 27 co-ops. in 123 villages. It was composed of 10,900 families, comprising 54,000 persons. 19,000 men and women worked on the land and 1,000 were industrial workers in 362 factories, of which the biggest employed 170, making agricultural implements. There were 1,000 persons employed in administration, including school-teachers and nurses, 600 women working in 251 canteens and 200 salesmen in shops. Next year it was hoped to shift workers from agriculture to industry so as to have only 16,000 on the land. Already the gross value of industrial production equals that of agricultural, and by October it would exceed it by 25 per cent. This meant that a thousand workers in industry were already earning as much as 19,000 workers on the land. . . .

He then gave me a mass of figures about production, and I asked how his improvements had been achieved. He gave the standard answer:

> (1) dense planting—this year he had planted treble the amount of potatoes and wheat per acre and double the amount of cotton; (2) more irrigation; (3) deep ploughing—1½ to 2 feet compared with an average of 7 inches before; (4) more fertiliser. Finally he listed his social services as follows: 20 old people's homes, 215 nurseries, 68 kindergartens, 251 canteens, 83 maternity clinics, and 4 electric flour mills.

"And how much technical staff have you?" I asked. The answer was 5 vets., 10 agricultural experts, 7 engineers. We trudged through the dust out of the village to see the long staple cotton, well over six feet high, in the experimental plot. On the way we passed under a magnificent ancient archway, with superb carving. I asked about it. I was told grimly that it was "something put up by the landlords before liberation."

My guide insisted that we see "the champion sweet potatoes." This meant an eight-mile drive. Significantly, we soon lost our way. This People's Commune, which is twenty kilometres by fifteen, was so large and so new that the Deputy Director didn't know the way from one village to another. Finally we found the experimental plot. There were the sweet potatoes, with their haulms six feet high. A crowd of peasants was enthusiastic because someone had taken the trouble to come and see.

### The Splitter

HOME AFTER DARK, and I was told that the Deputy Director of Public Relations had decided to have dinner with me. We dined alone in a private room in the hostel with my interpreter, Mr. Liu. I started, full of enthusiasm, about the People's Commune. "What I liked about it," I said, "was the peasants' dynamism."

"You are mistaken. The cause of what you have seen is not the dynamism of the peasants but a well-trained élite Communist leadership."

This was disheartening, but I proceeded with great cheerfulness: "Maybe, but what is wonderful about the Chinese Communist Party is that you have no bureaucracy here, nothing like the problem Khrushchev has been dealing with."

"Once again you are in error. Bureaucracy cannot exist in a Communist State. It is a failing of decadent capitalism."

"But what about what I have heard from Khrushchev in Russia?"

"There are no basic differences between Communist States. Bureaucracy is a capitalist disease."

Again, trying to be helpful: "Maybe we are disagreeing not about real things but about the meanings of words. Shall we seek to define bureaucracy?"

"No, our difference is due to the fact that we represent different social systems. For instance, we Communists call what the Americans are doing against Formosa aggression, but the Americans call it defence. The difference is due to the different systems."

"But there are quite a number of Americans who call what the Americans are doing in Formosa aggression."

"But, of course! The whole American people knows it to be aggression. It is only the American capitalists who do not."

"On this I feel entitled to correct you, since

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I have a little practical knowledge of America and Gallup Polls. There are quite a number of American people who support the capitalists. We had the same thing at the time of Suez, when the majority of the British people supported the Government."

"You are incorrect. The British people were against the Suez venture."

"Surely we can agree that you should tell me the facts about China and I should tell you the facts about England?"

"No, our difference is one of principle. We represent different social systems."

"But surely each of us could agree that the other is sincere and seeks to be truthful? For instance, we in the Labour Party accept the sincerity of the Chinese Communists, though we disagree with them in principle. Will you not reciprocate, accept our sincerity, and tolerate our differences with you? Surely this is what co-existence means?"

"Certainly, you have the right to your opinions, but this does not alter objective fact. For instance, take the five Bandung principles. Do you accept them?"

"Yes."

"Then you accept non-intervention as a principle?"

"Yes," I said, "and I accept it as applying to Hungary as well."

"That is a slander on the Soviet Union which I cannot tolerate."

"I gave it deliberately, as an example of what co-existence must mean, namely, that you should tolerate my disagreeing with you about Hungary."

"Co-existence cannot mean any compromise on basic principles."

"I came to China prepared to modify my principles if necessary in the light of empirical observation. I hope you will come to Britain one day, equally prepared to modify your principles if your empirical observation of British life does not bear them out."

"My view of Britain requires no modification. I am afraid I now have another appointment. Good-bye."

AFTERWARDS LIU SPOKE TO ME on the train. "What a strange man you are! You were trying to probe us and find differences. But there are none in China. The Deputy Director was right about everything, including what he said about Britain."

"So you accept his word against mine?"

"Of course. Mind you, he was very disconcerted and offended when you kept on trying to reach agreement with him about basic principles, on which there is a fundamental difference between the social system you represent and ours. Surely you realise agreement between us is only possible on such matters as avoiding war or aiming at world peace."

"But in that case, what is the good of my coming to China and talking to you people?"

"Well, it is certainly a waste of your time having the kind of discussion you had with the Director, trying to drive wedges between us Chinese. I do suggest you should not waste your time on another dinner like that when we get to Wuhan. Otherwise we shall draw the conclusion that you came here determined to try to split us."

**Paper Tiger**

MY LAST day has come and gone. No engagements at all. In many ways I am not sorry. What I have seen in the People's Communes has been far more exciting than anything I could have learnt in a formal interview with the Foreign Minister, or even in a talk with Chou En-lai. As an Englishman, I have been in China during three weeks of violent anti-Western agitation and, even more important, at the moment when a new stage of this social revolution began. True to form, Mr. Liu rang me up early this morning and told me he had arranged to take me to—guess!—an exhibition. Dutifully I went. After an hour, I told him I would like to spend the rest of the morning wandering through the Forbidden City by myself. Then I spent the afternoon writing, and in the middle was rung up from the Embassy by M. I told him the Chinese had arranged nothing for the evening, and he invited me to dinner. Then, at 5.30, Mr. Liu rang to say that a farewell dinner had been arranged for me.

"But I have just accepted an invitation from my British friends," I replied.

"The time of the dinner is 7.15," he said severely, and that was that.

WHEN I GOT TO THE restaurant I found waiting for me: Dr. Sun, Mr. Wu, and the two interpreters, Mr. Pan and Mr. Liu. As I came in, Mr. Wu stood up, took me by the hand and said, "Of course, we appreciated that, on your

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last day, your time would be so invaluable that it would be wrong to fix any appointments for you." To which I replied that I had spent a pleasant morning in the Forbidden City. After this we sat down to dinner, and I decided to use this last opportunity in order to discover, if I could, whether the Chinese really believe the Americans are a "paper tiger." Here is how our conversation went.

"Why do your top people sound so desirous of a peaceful solution in Formosa, while your masses are encouraged to bay for war? Is there not a contradiction here?"

Wu: "No, there is no contradiction. The demonstration you watched last Sunday was a mass demonstration for the peaceful solution proposed by Chou En-lai."

"But the people I talk to seem to be looking forward to wiping out the Americans. Do you personally really think the Americans are a paper tiger?"

Wu: "To answer that question it is necessary to define the phrase 'paper tiger.' We define it as a decadent imperialist power, whose superficial strength conceals its growing weakness. Anyway, I would remind you that we have already beaten the Americans twice, not only in Korea but also in our war of liberation, where we defeated millions of Chinese soldiers, armed to the teeth with American weapons."

"But to win a civil war against a Chinese army equipped with American weapons is not to prove the American armed forces a paper tiger."

Wu: "In any case, in the war of liberation we did defeat American imperialism, and the fact that America is a paper tiger was then demonstrated even more clearly in Korea. There the American soldier proved himself inferior to all the other Western allies. In our own Chinese phrase, he behaved like a pampered rich man's son. He won't fight without super equipment and he gets utterly demoralised when taken prisoner. As a soldier, he was inferior to the South Koreans, although he kept all the best equipment for himself. He is also cruel, since he relied on such disgusting weapons as the flame-throwing bazooka."

"But if the American soldier is as degenerate as all that, why did you not drive him out of Korea?"

Wu: "We defeated him decisively and he exposed his decadence."

"You know, to say that is not at all complimentary to your Army, which was deadlocked with the Americans for eighteen months and which lost hundreds of thousands of men in an unsuccessful attempt to throw him out of the peninsula."

Wu (defensively): "But as prisoners the Americans behaved disgracefully."

"I would not have mentioned it otherwise, but, since you have twice described our American allies as disgraceful prisoners, I should remind you that 25,000 Chinese prisoners preferred not to return to China and are now on Formosa."

Wu: "In Korea we fought at a disadvantage, since we had only just finished a long, terrible civil war, whereas the Americans were fresh. Now it would be different."

"We British do not believe in boasting or in underestimating our enemies. We always give them the benefit of the doubt in our military estimates, and we always warn our people how formidable our enemies are. And, because we tend to overestimate our enemies, this makes our victories even greater when they are achieved."

Wu: "I do not agree with you. In our view, overestimation of the enemy would make our own people afraid."

AFTER THIS THE MEAL WENT ON, course after course, in its usual Chinese style. It was a grim little dinner party, and I was beginning to think that everything would finish with a whimper when suddenly Mr. Wu rose and toasted my health.

"Now," he said, "on this last day of your visit, we regard you as our friend for the first time. When will you be back?"

"Well, I think on the whole the best time would be exactly two years from now, since I shall be able to see what has been achieved in the interval. But do you really want me back after all the troubles we have had?"

Wu: "We have learnt to respect you as an honest investigator. We have studied your methods of asking questions and correlating information, and we are impressed by it. We realise you are not hostile but are searching for the truth. So, good-bye. We shall see you again in two years' time."

THAT WAS THE LAST thing he said to me. Next day I had the pleasure of breakfasting in Peking and sleeping safely the same night in my own bed in London.

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# *The Pleasures of Knowing Rose Macaulay*

ONE OF the many things that we shall all remember about Rose Macaulay was her combination of opposites. Her frail appearance was contrasted with a physical energy that would shame a heavyweight; her ridicule of the pretentious was mitigated by her cheerful, even merry, acceptance of all human foibles; her fastidiousness, intellectual and social, did not deter her from suffering fools quite gladly, or deriving pleasure from Levantine guides or Black Sea boatmen. Her gift of derision was unfailing, but she never laughed at things so intimate that her perspicacity might wound. She amused everybody and offended no one. In comparison with her, other witty people appeared conceited, snobbish, or harsh. She possessed a naturally Christian soul.

Her penetrating insight into the affectations or falsities of others was formidable and even disconcerting. The equability of her manner often tempted people to vaunt or give themselves away. Suddenly they would observe a sparkle in her eye and their exuberance would collapse. Rarely did she say anything to reveal her contempt for their egoism; we felt that it had been observed and noted and we were usefully crushed. "You really mean that?" she would ask occasionally; and we would realise that we hadn't meant it in the least, but were merely indulging in an arresting phrase. She was a champion of sincerity and in her presence all our many forms of falsity withered and died.

I have often seen her displeased but never angry. There was an acid element in her intelligence, but it was citrous merely and never poisoned. I remember on one occasion, when she was overwhelmed by her book on ruins, hearing somebody assure her that there was a castle in Cappadocia that she really must visit. "My book is growing too big as it is," she murmured coldly. "But unless you go to Cappadocia," the man insisted, having been there himself, "you will miss some of the strangest ruins in the world." "I shall," she replied firmly, "make it a point to miss many very strange ruins." There was always something formidable in her prim snubs.

What fascinated me most about Rose Macaulay, apart from the shining arrows of her mind, was her passion for bathing. I remember that once when she was staying with us in the country during those ice-days that mark an English Easter, she manifested a desire to swim. We told her that, apart from the English Channel which was sixteen miles away and cold in April, all we could offer her was our pond. It was a muddy pond, not very deep, and thick with weeds and water-snakes. We told her of these disadvantages. "Oh, I never mind things like that," she answered, and within ten minutes there she was swimming happily in the viscous pool. She made us all feel middle-aged.

On one occasion, when I was about to embark upon a foreign lecture tour, she was invited by the British Council to assist them in preparing a leaflet which would inform foreigners of who I was and of what I had written. I was embarrassed on hearing of this commission, partly because I felt it absurd to impose upon a busy woman so trivial a task, and partly because I feared that if Rose Macaulay really read my works, especially my earlier works, she would derive therefrom a lasting scorn of my writing. What alarmed me specially was that she insisted on my lending her a novel that I had once written and of which I was deeply ashamed. Yet when she came to study the subject she assured me that it was that very novel that she had en-



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joyed the most. I am quite sure that she intended no flattery; she had realised, with her sensitive antennæ, that I was ashamed of the book, and in her splendid charity, she was seeking to cheer me up. I had always worshipped her intelligence. From that day onwards I also worshipped her kindness of heart.

How often, in these past months, have I heard my friends murmur, "Dear Rose, how we miss her." There will be many men and women who will continue to miss her all their lives.

*Harold Nicolson*

ONE OF the links between Rose and myself was the shared passion for swimming. A few years ago she sponsored my membership of the Lansdowne Club—the idea being that we should meet of an afternon when its subterranean bath was least likely to be populous, and enjoy many a dip together. Alas! Apart from one memorable occasion, these aquatic projects failed to come about. Rose, not I, was always elsewhere: often in the Serpentine, or the Bosphorus, or the Mediterranean sea. But one chilly, soaking summer day we did contrive a rendezvous. After lunching with our publisher, Mark Bonham Carter, we three descended into the echoing, wanly-electrified, deserted concrete pleasure-vault to take the plunge. Presently Rose emerges from her canvas tentings, voluble, in a one-piece striped exiguous bathing suit, her nose, mouth, chin severe, her brow, her ice-blue eyes obliterated beneath a black diving helmet some sizes too large for her. She carries an inflated rubber mattress, and as we advance towards the brink, casts it upon the waters with business-like despatch. The moment after, I am standing alone; she has vanished. Another moment, and her brisk commentary is rattling down as it were from ceiling-level: she has scampered up, up, out, to the outermost verge of the high-diving board. There I still see her figure indomitably poised: androgynous tall figure, flat as a shape cut out in white paper and blacked in to knees and shoulders; gaunt, comical, adorable—heroically topped with an antique martial casque. She is off, she has jumped feet first, clutching her nose; has cleft the chlorinated blue and sunk sheer as a pair of scissors to the very bottom of the white-tiled basin. She takes a long time to come up; indeed (having by now immersed myself with caution) I become slightly alarmed and haul her upwards by the shoulders. She thanks me cheerfully, and paddles round and round, sketching an old-fashioned side-stroke. Mark swims noiseless, watchful, amused, at a discreet distance. I had assumed Rose to be, like myself, an expert swimmer: it is not so. This fanatical amphibian is not at home in water. She explains this to me as if it had never been a bar to full enjoyment. "I'm the wrong shape, you see—too long, too thin. I never could remain at the correct angle for self-propulsion. Do swing my legs up." I do so. Down they fall again. Her laughter is so infectious that I laugh too; but I think: She simply isn't *safe*; surely she could just go down and not surface again. How is it that a creature apparently so ill-suited to this element should sport in it so fearlessly? Also, her lips are blue. She clambers on to the mattress, stretches her peeled-wand limbs full length, and allows me to pull her from end to end of the bath. Almost dreamily—for her prim, somehow practical, academic accents had too much wit and crackle ever to sound dreamy—she ejaculates: "Oh, Rosamond dear, this is extraordinarily pleasant! I feel like Cleopatra in her barge."

Once, driving down Duke Street in the rush-hour, I was caught in an unparallelled traffic tangle. Obstruction, impotence, rage, hysteria of horns and human yells exploded within, without, on every side. In front of me, a huge lorry at an angle blocked the road junction. Suddenly, rapidly, from behind its inert and monstrous bulk, an unostentatious saloon model car emerged. Forward it darted headlong into non-space: then, as rapidly, reversed itself, withdrew behind the lorry, once more into non-space. A hush fell. Clearly no one could believe their eyes. When finally, somehow, we disembroiled ourselves and I was able to crawl on, I turned to scrutinise the (doubtless abashed) perpetrator of this outrage. It could only be Rose at the wheel; and Rose it was, in a characteristic hat, passing equably to her destination, superlatively unembarrassed. I called out a mock-sarcastic jibe, to tease her; she did not hear.

She was forever in transit, physically, intellectually, spiritually; energetically not eating, not drinking or sleeping, so it seemed; yet such was her transparency and charity of spirit that she seemed universally available to her friends. She has been called child-like; but to me she sug-

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gested youth, a girl, of that pure eccentric English breed which perhaps no longer exists, sexless yet not unfeminine, naïve yet shrewd; and although romantic, stripped of all veils of self-interest and self-involvement. I cannot write of her tenderness and understanding of the grief of others, fruit of deep personal suffering triumphantly surmounted. No one had better cause than I to know and value it. Her last letter arrived the morning before the morning of her death. One of the things it discussed was "our corrupting profession." I was meditating on her incorruptibility when the news reached me. With the first piercing pang came the thought: "But we have all just seen her, just been talking to her! How like her to slip off and run lightly, unhampered, without backward glance, straight into her death. Straight through it."

*Rosamond Lehmann*

"IT WOULD have to be a High Church ape," says Rose over the telephone, "because it would like the genuflections so." She is talking about her plans for *The Towers of Trebizond*, and I am trying in vain to catch her attention enough to ask her to luncheon. "Then would Tuesday be all right?" I ask, more loudly, but Rose only answers with another question, "And what other things do apes do? It could play the piano, of course, but not the flute, I suppose. It seems a waste. Everybody plays the piano, generally not so well as an ape."

She herself played as it were, the telephone, and she did it extremely well so long as time were no object. She cannot have telephoned, like other women, from her bed, for she was an early riser. I imagine her bolt upright, excavating the telephone like an archæologist from masses of books and paper. Even down the wire one could feel her eyes fixed on one: curious serpent's eyes which never lost their dispassion. Indeed, there was something serpentine about her face altogether, even to the slight hiss in her speech.

Not that she was cold-blooded: far from it. For a year or two I was chairman of a committee upon which she sat, and I can remember the extreme vigour of her interventions. Fortified by tomato juice—for she ate and drank very little—she kept us all up to the mark, and was likely to flash out remarks like "It is stupid to think that just because I never cared to marry I have no experience of life." Whenever one looked at her one could almost see the tumult going on behind the delicate bones of her head. Fragments of poetry, scraps of history, the behaviour of apes, the no less surprising behaviour of friends, problems in theology and literary tact: they crowded upon her all at once and all the time. When she swam in chilly seas, or rode a wartime bicycle in the London streets ("I never realised that St. James's Street is a kind of alp"), or drove alone down the Spanish coast, it must have been in order to still an unceasing appetite for people and books and the ideas which they expressed. She was as thin and neat as an umbrella, and she never appeared hurried or fussed; but equally she never seemed either bored or inert. Almost the last time I saw her we were both sitting in Ivy Compton-Burnett's dining-room, and she was carrying out a firm inquisition upon her hostess's beliefs. "I cannot understand you, Ivy, a clever woman like you. You have never got the hang of it. Of course, you may perfectly well be right. There may be nothing to believe *in*. Though I don't lose hope."

Her secret was that every aspect of this world and the next offered her delightful possibilities of discovery. She disliked things to be finally settled, and so she never came to the end either of a subject or a friendship. This meant that her friends devoured her, for she managed to renew them in their own eyes. I can remember being held, late at night, on a doorstep in a draughty autumn while Rose cross-questioned me about myself. And below the surface of this firm old lady—not that one ever thought of her as old—little by little so much tenderness of feeling, so much comprehension came glimmering up through her words that I felt as if she were the one person who exactly understood my own bewilderments. And then she became practical again. "You'd better give this wretched car a push. The battery has been very sulky all this week." One pushed and the car jerked in anger. "See you at Madge's, see you at Honor's, see you at Joan's, and don't forget my Gargoyle party next week." Nobody ever zigzagged more, either driving a car or walking through life; yet the essential part of her was perfectly still. And for those who knew her there will always be

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something absurd rather than sad in the thought that the telephone will ring, but no voice exclaim, "This is Rose."

*Alan Pryce-Jones*

MY ONLY encounter with Rose Macaulay was at a large noisy cocktail party in Chelsea. *Potterism* had been one of the anti-bibles of my dissident youth, along with *The Way of All Flesh* and Mencken-Nathan's *American Mercury*; and I had lately very much enjoyed *The Towers of Trebizond*. So when someone pointed her out—I remember her as sparsely erect, with thin, mobile lips and bird-bright eyes—I made my way to her with the general idea of paying homage (almost always a foolish idea if it *is* general). "Miss Macaulay, there is something I want to tell you," I began. "I'm Dwight Macdonald and I'm on ENCOUNTER at the moment, that is, I'm not really an editor but——" At this point I become somehow involved in a complicated explanation of my precise rôle on the magazine, at the conclusion of which she fixed me with a bird-bright eye: "Was *that* what you wanted to tell me, Mr. Macdonald?" She smiled a low-calorie smile. I managed to produce my compliment, its force rather blunted. She seemed austerely pleased.

*Dwight Macdonald*

WHEN, a few days before this last Christmas, a card arrived from Rose, it conveyed, somehow, no sense of shock or surprise. How like Rose, one smiled, to send out a last Christmas card after her death! It seemed a natural symbol of continuity, bridging the gap, helping to eliminate the sense of loss, just as her memorial service had done, musical and unmournful like a last party to her friends, as she had planned it to be. Whether or not there is a survival of the soul after death, as she always hoped, the life force in her will survive in the memory, continuing to enhance life in her friends, as her presence did before.

Rose loved parties—not as the young do, restless and seeking, nor as the old do, lonely and bored, but because she loved people, moreover loved them not just with the heart but with the mind. She could never be bored. Whatever the company, there was always something, somebody, some idea to kindle her curiosity and arouse her zest. Whatever was said, she loved to listen, amused at the commonplace, stimulated by the new, diverted by the outrageous. Eagerly inspecting the flat of a new friend, she looked into his wardrobe and exclaimed, "Oh! So you're one of these young men who like leather jackets. Do put one on for me!"

She hated to forgo a party, with its promise of human experience. "I think I'd better not," she would reply to an invitation. "I've got something else on that evening, and I'm not supposed to be well." But a few days later she would telephone, "May I come after all? I seem to be perfectly all right." She was seldom, in her late seventies, perfectly all right. Sometimes she would go suddenly dizzy and pale, needing but never requesting support. But a sniff of smelling salts, the good old Victorian remedy, would revive her, and she would return to the crowd.

Her misadventures, such was her sense of fun, became adventures. I remember an afternoon of high comedy when she came to Sunday lunch, bubbling over not with annoyance but with amusement at the fact that the water, for some unexplained reason, had failed to flow in her flat, and she could expect not a drop more until Monday. Evelyn Waugh was there, and Henry Green, who had served in the Fire Service during the war and had written of it after, hence should know of these things. So at least challenged Evelyn. Henry, responding, put through a call to the Water Board, and asked knowingly for "Turn Cock." He got no satisfaction, so the three of them drove off after lunch, driven by Rose in her car, to her flat. They clambered all over the roof, these three notable authors, over the slippery slates amid the London grime, and located the cistern, which was approached by a steep iron ladder. Rose, as Evelyn recalled, "shinned up it like a monkey." The two younger ones followed her, with more circumspection. But nothing, despite Henry's professional experience, could be done. So they went down to the flat—that flat so disorderly in its clutter of pictures and objects and books, but so personal, since she had chosen and loved and lived with each one. Here they found that the water was running again. Turn Cock had turned up after all.

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This car of Rose's, usually an obsolete model, became part of her personality, like the things in the flat. She endowed it with anthropomorphic qualities, giving it its head, like a horse, on familiar routes. One night, during a period of petrol rationing, she insisted, despite my protests, on driving me home. Absently she made as if to turn to the right, then pulled the wheel over abruptly like a rein, remarking, "It must have thought it was going home." In earlier days she had a similar affection for her bicycle. A friend remembers how, as a young publisher, he came down to the front door of his office to greet Michael Arlen, resplendent in a sleek Rolls Royce by the kerb. At that moment Rose pedalled up on her ramshackle bicycle, just behind it. The publisher went to her assistance, and together, chuckling at the incongruity, they carried the bicycle into the hall. That started a thirty years' friendship.

Rose was extraordinarily modest. When, on her last cruise to the Black Sea, she was shown to her cabin, she noticed a bouquet of flowers there, wrapped in cellophane, and drew back, saying, "This must be the wrong cabin. These can't be for me." Before her first trip to Turkey I gave her an introduction to some friends in Smyrna, who were anxious to meet her and invite her to stay. But modestly, reluctant to bother them with a stranger, she went to a cheap hotel, sending them a message next morning, with a profuse apology for the trouble, asking for the loan of a thermometer, as she did not feel well.

Rose loved to dispute, in a frank and witty and provocative way, about the religious beliefs which one held. Lying in hospital, she broached the topic with an Irish nurse, a Roman Catholic, who declared that at Lourdes she had seen an effigy of the Virgin, shedding living tears—a phenomenon attested, she further declared, by a leading French doctor. "What things people will believe!" laughed Rose to a visiting friend. I remember a stimulating evening when she expounded her Anglican faith to a sceptical and argumentative Orthodox Jew.

She had about her, perhaps, with her sense of historical continuity, something of the Pantheist —as that last Christmas card, showing the Parthenon successively as the temple of Athena, a Byzantine church, a Turkish mosque, and a sight for tourists, suggested. "Has it been improved or damaged by all the work done on it down the ages?" she wrote in one of her last articles. "I myself feel a nostalgia for its mosque and minaret days, but then I have a passion for *mélange* and the fantastically impure.... Apollo into Christ, Artemis into Madonna, rectangle into dome, representational into hieratic, the emergence in golden mosaic of 'Almighty God, gloomy, but with an expression of power,' and of Our Lady and all the saints." That card is an appropriate epitaph.

*Patrick Kinross*

I FIRST met Rose in the war, when we both spent much of our leisure reading in the British Museum. "Come and have a Young Woman's Christian lunch with me," she said one day, over the catalogues, and immensely flattered I queued with her at the neighbouring Y.W.C.A. canteen, talking of poetry, bombs, and book reviewing. After that she came often to tea with me at the house I shared with Jaqueline and Philip Hope-Wallace: she always scrupulously and quite unnecessarily brought her own milk-ration. The joint friendship lasted for the rest of her life. No party we gave seemed complete without her, and the upright, uncompromising horse-hair sofa, on which she invariably chose to sit, disregarding all more comfortable chairs, was always the centre of the room.

Rose was one of the few people I have known who could talk, think, and discuss as naturally on the telephone as face to face. Telephone conversations with her play a large part in my memories; the whole of her active, original mind and the edge of her wit then seemed concentrated in the disembodied voice. We shared a devotion to the 17th century and she would often ring up to settle some minor point. "Who said Presbyterianism was no religion for a gentleman?"—not that I could always answer—but speculation and association would carry us by way of the Smectymnuus controversy to the Latin poems of Milton, on through the labyrinth of the Thomason Tracts, with a side glance at an obscure point in the Laudian liturgy and out into the sunlight of Herrick's *Noble Numbers*, with incidental intelligence about mutual friends and the relative state of our work exchanged *en route*: all of this on her part fluent, expert, easy, as though these were the most natural things in the world to

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discuss over the telephone—as indeed with her they were.

A great place for chance meetings with Rose was the London Library, especially when she was reading for her Portugal book and her *Pleasures of Ruins*—during the work on this book she was at one time in danger of burying herself under the avalanche of her own notes and knowledge from so many different sources. Turning a dark corner among the book-stacks, one would come suddenly upon Rose squatting —an awkward position for one so tall, but squat she certainly did—in a narrow cleft between the shelves with an enormous tome open on her knees. She liked to fetch her own books, however remote or unreachable. In one part of the library precipitous ladders provided a short-cut from one floor to the next. Notices attached to them directed members to the stairs and informed them that they used the ladders at their own risk. Perhaps the idea of risk appealed to that streak of romantic daring in Rose's nature, or perhaps she just wanted to get to the books by the quickest possible route: whatever the reason she was for ever up and down those ladders like a chamois, until the library suppressed them—possibly, as I have always suspected, out of anxiety for the safety of one of their most distinguished members.

*C. V. Wedgwood*

IT WAS as her publisher that I first met Rose Macaulay. She remains in my memory an unchanging figure, frail and of an almost diaphanous texture, with a look of "la Vieille Dame" in the Babar books, of unknown antiquity and unvarying gaiety and zest.

Our communications ran a consistent course whether or not a novel was imminent. Indeed, with Rose, a novel was always imminent, though since the war she only published two, *The World My Wilderness* (1950) and *The Towers of Trebizond* (1956). But she always had a novel in mind even if its progress was interrupted by a book on ruins or an article to finance a voyage or a review for the *Times Literary Supplement* which she could not resist. She told me that her novels started with places —the blitzed ruins of London, Trebizond, or Venice about to be inundated which was the subject she had in mind when she died. The place having been selected, she populated it with appropriate characters. I never saw a novel of hers in manuscript, but she said she wrote them in the back of laundry books on journeys and then typed them out. The first I saw of a novel by Rose was in typescript and with the typescript came an eager demand for criticism and comment.

This request always made me feel somewhat inadequate. For one thing there was very little to be done with Rose's novels. There they stand, one aspect of her personality in print (I have never thought that the novel form was altogether appropriate to her gifts), and by the time they reached her publisher's desk I very much doubt if she could have altered them to any advantage. She wanted to be told that the book was good and she liked to discuss at considerable length on the telephone, on postcards, and over meals various apparently minor problems which arose. In the case of *The Towers of Trebizond* the name of the narrator was the source of much argument. The whole point, she argued, was that no one should know Vere's sex. The name was changed almost weekly from Vicky to Nicky to Evelyn to Vere, and at one time it seemed that in writing the book Rose's main purpose was to confuse the reader on this point. By the reader, she really meant the reviewer. The blurb had to be carefully drafted so that no clue should be given, and when the Book Society made it their monthly choice, I was told to persuade them to preserve a similar discretion in their appreciation. She was always much concerned with what appeared on the dust-jacket. She did not like picture covers though she sometimes produced one of her own rather small and very crowded drawings for this purpose. She detested being described as "witty" and quotations which employed this adjective were on her Index. With *Trebizond*, there was the problem of the Imprimatur. This read:

*Nihil Obstat*
✠ Raymond Long Crichel
*Imprimatur*
Johannes Betjeman, *Decanus*

It was in her view a good joke, and none of her Roman Catholic friends thought it in bad taste. Would we include it? Eventually it was printed in a limited number of copies for distribution to her friends.

As the date of publication approached reviews became an urgent preoccupation. Though she

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pretended to be indifferent, Rose was deeply concerned about how her books were received and if a critical review reappeared she minded very much. Sales did not seem to matter to her, opinions did. In the case of *Trebizond*, she was particularly concerned that one reviewer in particular should not receive the book. He had come to one of her parties unasked and really she did not know him. He had rung her up, she told me, and said: "Is that Rose?" to which she replied, 'Yes, but who are you?" "John," he answered. "Well," said Rose, "you aren't John Betjeman, and you aren't John Raymond, and you aren't John Metcalf, and you aren't John Lehmann," and put down the receiver. This was the kind of behaviour that gave her a reputation of being formidable, as indeed she was. Though she enjoyed delivering this crushing blow so unwisely provoked and though she judged it well deserved, she was none the less anxious lest this easy victory produce an unfavourable review. The reviewer in question—such is my ineptitude in these matters—received the book and reviewed it very well. Rose's conscience pricked.

I saw a great deal of her. We lunched regularly, she came to every party we gave at Collins, arriving punctually at six p.m. and staying till the end, and she was at every literary party to which I went. She came to dine with us at Victoria Road and on occasion I had breakfast with her at the Lansdowne Club. When I was married she gave a luncheon there for my wife and me. She asked an enjoyable group of friends, various literary and clerical lights including Rosamond Lehmann. She had instructed everyone to bring a bathing dress. Only Rosamond and I obeyed, and after lunch together with Rose we went down to that subterranean swimming bath where we found one companion who was clearly training to swim the Channel. Rosamond moved about the surface of the water like a stately Spanish galleon or a beautiful water lily transplanted from its natural habitat, while Rose, a two-dimensional figure in a black bathing dress, shot down the shoot again and again and urged us to race her across the bath.

Rose compiled an anthology called *Personal Pleasures*. Another anthology could be compiled called *The Pleasures of Knowing Rose Macaulay*. It would be a long anthology and would include sections devoted to her many qualities. Pride of place would go to Integrity. If before she died I had been asked to define integrity to some moral moron, perhaps to one of those who robbed her flat and knocked her down a year or two ago, or to a man from Mars, I would have arranged for him to meet Rose Macaulay.

*Mark Bonham Carter*

NOT LONG after the war we gave a party and the French husband of our "daily" came in to help wash the glasses.

"Who was the lady who chained her bicycle to the area railings?" he asked afterwards, rightly suspecting that he was on the track of some new form of English eccentricity.

Rose was known to be addicted to this practice, somehow reminiscent—vicariously through a machine—of the former demonstrations of militant suffragettes. He was told her name.

"Ah," he said, "if only I had known you were going to invite Miss Macaulay I could have brought *Potterism* with me and she could have signed it."

After hearing who she was, the fettered bicycle seemed to cause him no further surprise. His familiarity with her novels well suggests the wide range of her literary popularity.

I met Rose first when I was about twenty and found her, at immediate impact, prim, academic, rather alarming. I believe she expressed disapproval of the works of Ronald Firbank. It all seemed very chilly and Cambridge. Nothing could, of course, have been further from a true assessment of her character. So far from being prim, she was prepared to consider all human behaviour with the coolest of judgments. All the same, the suspicion was permissible to those who did not already know her; and she would thoroughly have enjoyed being thought Cambridge.

Much later, referring to some recently published novel—perhaps *A Handful of Dust*—she said to me: "I have not yet read it. Not a very interesting subject—adultery in Mayfair."

"Why should you think that uninteresting?"

"You are quite right," she said, "it was a silly thing to say. Subjects are entirely a matter of how they are treated by the novelist."

A word should certainly be said about her extraordinary Christmas cards, designed by herself, though executed by some hand more prac-

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tical in drawing and embellished with Latin verses of her own contrivance. It was at times not at all easy to guess their precise meaning, and perhaps those who traffic in such matters will one day produce a psychological work on them to explain her character and philosophy of life. There was usually about the pictures some suggestion of her own enjoyment in swimming and driving, the last taste, I remember on one occasion, unhindered by a pea-soup London fog. Rather basely, we preferred to leave the car and walk.

You felt with Rose that there was no one on earth she would not stand up to, once she had made up her mind on some subject. She would describe how, arriving in the remote villages of alien countries, she would at times be greeted with a shower of stones by those who took her for a witch. So far as one could gather, such a reception did not daunt her in the least. In fact, she said she liked it, because the same thing had happened to Pliny. Perhaps she was a witch—a White Witch.

Latterly she gave the impression of a being who has cast off already much of material things, one who might suddenly float like gauze away towards the distant horizon. I last saw her in the summer at Venice, where a congress of European intellectuals was in progress on the island of San Giorgio.

"What on earth are *you* doing here?"

"I might well ask you the same question."

"Oh, me?" she said, "I'm just on my way to the Black Sea."

*Anthony Powell*

Rose was once giving me a spirited ride in her car down the Tottenham Court Road when a full-grown elephant emerged from Torrington Place. An unusual collision seemed imminent. There was no collision: wherever Rose drove she seemed to carry an extra passenger—her guardian angel. But this functionary seemed to be off duty on another day in the vicinity, when we came out of a restaurant after lunch and found three policemen assembled beside her car. Her reasonable but rapid protestations about the harmlessness and even inevitability of her choice of a parking-place were soon overborne, and as we drove away she contemplated a speech in court in her own defence.

I went to court with her, just in case the support of a witness might be helpful. The magistrate, a quiet, fatherly type, looked more willing to try and understand than to condemn, but he seemed a little hard of hearing. Adjusting his spectacles, he contemplated from a distance the frail-looking offender. When asked to plead guilty or not guilty, Rose pleaded guilty with a good many modifications, none of them audible.

"Speak up, Mrs. Macaulay!" said the magistrate encouragingly, as he cupped a patient hand over his ear.

Several hundred more words dissolved in the stale and static air.

"Am I to understand, then, that you do in fact plead guilty, Mrs. Macaulay? That is what we are trying to arrive at. If you have anything else to say, you will have a chance to speak when we have heard the evidence."

After we had heard the evidence:

"Well, you have heard what the officer said, Mrs. Macaulay. Is there anything else you want to say?"

There was something else. With a strained look of considerate curiosity the magistrate actually bent his ear forward with his hand, like a small shutter on a hinge. I think neither he nor anybody else present caught more than a phrase or two of what seemed to be a voluble but reasoned claim for a degree of civil liberties, particularly for the lack of subversive intention in wishing to park one's car within walking distance of one's eating-place.

"Very well. But you have heard what the officer said." Then, in a cheerful tone, "Pay ten shillings, Mrs. Macaulay."

The law-abiding person who would not take the good sense of the law for granted was the same who once expressed, I remember, a strong distaste for the word "leader," applied by somebody to the most conspicuous politician of the day.

"Must you call him a *leader*? I don't like that word. Hitler used to be called a leader, if you remember. Don't we all remember? I don't want a leader, do you? Do you feel you need a leader? I don't think I do. I like to think I'm capable of leading myself."

That capability, so wonderfully mixed with modesty, energy, and a sense of fun, caused her to lead herself to an understanding that membership of the Church of England was compatible with her liberalism, her traditionalism,

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her questioning mind, and her natural and no doubt inculcated piety. The last time but one that I heard her was in a broadcast interview. After defining her own faith she finely denied that to hold another was to be in outer darkness: all faiths were valuable as different ways of getting at truth.

The last time I saw her was in the house of Canon Collins after Paul Robeson had sung at evensong in St. Paul's. I introduced Robeson to her (though they must have met before) and the extreme physical contrast between her wan fragility and his great stature was forgotten in the resemblance, the humanity, of their respective ways of looking at life.

*William Plomer*

"Rose, Rose, Rose, Rose, shall I never see thee more?" So went the glee we sang in childhood, and this catch caught at my heart when I heard of the death of one whom I had only known a few weeks, yet whom I loved with an enthusiasm that quite possessed me.

I knew, when I first met Rose Macaulay at some gathering of friends, that I wanted to please her and shine for her, and that she would sharpen my bluntness. Because of this fervent admiration I leapt at the suggestion of joining a ship on which she was sailing, bound for Greece and a tour of the Crimean and Turkish coasts. Rose, the keenest of the passengers, was looking forward to this cruise and was to love and live it more than any. A few weeks before we embarked she had broken her hip and her hand, but as her bones like her spirit had lost no sap or spring of youth, and as her weight was negligible, she seemed not to remember the accident. The arenas and eminences of Delphi, our first stop, she scaled with no totter. "Don't photograph me in ruins," she said, and we obeyed. In the temple of Aegina—reached on a donkey she chose from a herd as being the likeliest—she bestrode the highest points of pediments. Neither amused nor impressed by her own unusualness she swam our many Hellesponts, not as an ageing woman managing splendidly but as part of the beauty and the tide.

I remember the acuteness of her disappointment when she did not draw a place for a desperate expedition to Baskiserail: it entailed six hours of precipice-driving in a bus after dark, a brief visit at dawn to the crumbles of a Tartar city, a night in what the guide-book called "a wretched kahn," and an admission by the Russians of its being "extremely primitive" —six in a bed. "I shall take a droshky," said Rose. Did she visualise a taxi, or a troika? She couldn't say, but her faith she pinned to a droshky. Dressed in her colourless-sparrow's garb, a well-secured toque, a basket, and a crook, I saw her stump off indomitably to a bus-seat gladly resigned by a less intrepid traveller. I was limping behind with an extra jersey and a deck-chair mattress to make her independent of beds of Ware; but she would have none of them—"This is very warm," she said, fingering her brindle-cotton jacket, "I'll be like the others."

The tedium of a day at sea was relieved by a Brains Trust. Rose, the Padre, and two others presided over by a Q.C. question-master, were asked if they considered Death preferable to Dishonour. The Padre led off, his cloth harnessing him to the classic reply that Belief making Death so happy what hesitation could there be? This was not in the mood of the listeners, who felt uneasy. But Rose, the last questioned, knew games and how to play them. "Dishonour every time," she said; "no question at all—Dishonour." The team was next asked what other kind of life they could have wished for. "One with absolute power," said Rose. "Perhaps an emperor of Trebizond's. Anyway, Absolute Power."

She had our ship in thrall; we gave her our hearts and peals of laughter. Her manner was not gay—she threw no confetti—but her caustic flares could make us hilarious.

The night before leaving I gave her a close little hat filmy with ashen veil; though sober enough, I felt it to be too girlish for me. She seemed pleased out of all proportion. Did she wear it, I wonder, and remember her ardently admiring friend who now feels unkindly robbed of new-found and still uncounted treasure?

*Diana Cooper*

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*Edward Shils*

# Old Societies, New States

## *A Dialogue at Rhodes*

NEARLY four years ago, I went out to India to collect material on the Indian intellectuals. After about a year there, I began to see that the honeymoon of traditional society and modern democratic government in Asia was coming to an end. The hard grind of mutual adaptation, of living from day-to-day while trying to confront the fundamental problems of misery and apathy and passionate parochialism, was slowly destroying the exhilaration of independence. This appeared to me to be a phenomenon requiring much more fundamental thought than academic scholars, journalists, and politicians had thus far accorded to it.

When a problem seems worthy of serious intellectual consideration nowadays, what can be done about it? One possibility is detailed study of a particular country or a particular institution. This is already being done in European and particularly in American universities. It is a very slow, roundabout, and problematical process if one wishes to arouse intellectual opinion, to heighten awareness, to strengthen the will to act in the new states and the will to understand and to help in the longer established states of the West. A seminar seemed to be called for.

It has become the fashion recently to denigrate the international seminars and conferences which have flourished since the end of the war. They are said to be inflated by the dramatic exaggeration of their mission, intellectually superficial, over-organised, academic in their irrelevance to real life, and deviously political. Participants with official responsibilities too often suffer from the mental calcification of the eminent, their tongues are suffused with sonorous clichés, and at best they are discreet to the point of barrenness. Participants without official responsibilities are frequently too utopian or too cynical. Moreover, the large numbers at most seminars and the personal vanity of their eminent participants render impossible any close discussion or any genuine confrontation of alternatives.

We were aware of these dangers when we decided to try to organise a seminar at Rhodes. We would have discussion, no papers would be read, there would be no speeches, set or impromptu—we would seek a free interchange of ideas already possessed, cross-questioning to clarify them and above all an atmosphere which would lead the participants to discover new ideas, latent in their own thoughts or emerging on the edge of what others said. We would represent no governments or interests, and we would avoid both well-wishing optimism and ungenerous hopelessness. We would even try to avoid that ugly combination of flattery, apology, condescension, and national touchiness which is the mark of meetings between people from recently colonial countries and those from the recently ruling powers. By the length of our meetings we would try to overcome the eagerness of most minds to touch only the surface and then fly off. By mixing politicians, journalists, and university teachers with a wide range of experience outside the academic world, we would avoid professorial droning and dryness. A small group of outstanding minds, living together for nine days in an atmosphere of friendship, away from the diverting pleasures of a great city seemed to be a good receipt.

The results we sought were a greater sensi-



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tivity towards the forces affecting the movement towards representative government and public liberties in the new states and old societies of Africa and Asia, a sort of general budget of resources and requirements. We wished the means to be informal conversations in which a contention could be elaborated and scrutinised, in which a man could be pressed on a point and he could answer and return with a supplementary answer when he saw that his first effort had not brought clarity or conviction. What we sought was the freedom and persistence of a dialogue. More deeply, we hoped to contribute towards the growth of a network of fellowship of liberal-spirited intellectuals all over the world, whose further thought on these hard problems would be encouraged and sustained by a feeling of affinity with their opposite members across boundaries of profession, generation, nationality, and continent.

We had our ups and downs. The Ford Foundation with its customary open-handed sympathy agreed to support the initiative of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. I travelled to India again to benefit from the counsel of Asoka Mehta and I then prepared a very elaborate draft agenda to give our prospective members an idea of the topics we might discuss. It was criticised and revised. Papers were requested. Obstacles presented themselves. Mr. C. D. Deshmukh, who had tentatively agreed to serve as chairman, was lost to us when we shifted the date of the seminar from December to September. Sardar K. M. Panikkar (who was the first to send in his paper on "The Traditional Order and the Free Society") begged off because of the press of ambassadorial duties during the de Gaulle crisis. Mr. Hugh Gaitskell (after sending in his paper on "Opposition" had to cancel his participation because of events in Cyprus; Mr. Walter Reuther had to withdraw because the United Automobile Workers went on strike at General Motors and Ford, and new contracts had to be negotiated. Mr. Dudley Senanayake could not leave Ceylon because of the "Emergency." Beirut had to be cancelled as a site of the seminar. (In fact, one of the persons we had tentatively considered as a member was conducting military operations against the Government from his mountain headquarters.) Indonesia was in civil war, and the Army seized power in Iraq; in Burma the Prime Minister turned over the Government to the Army. At least we had a real problem to discuss.

## East and West

FINALLY we assembled at Rhodes in one of the worst *de luxe* hotels in the world, faces handsome with intelligence. (Raymond Aron, Bertrand de Jouvenel, Michael Polanyi, Gunnar Myrdal, Robert M. Hutchins, Judge Charles Wyzansky, D. R. Gadgil, J. K. Galbraith, Ignazio Silone, Kenneth Kirkwood, Prince Kukrit Pramoj, Minoo Masani, Moshe Sharett, Oya Ogunsheye, Thomas Diop, Richard Rovere, Asoka Mehta, and many others. . . .)

Was the discussion "a conversation"? The room was too large, and there were forty people around the hollow rectangular table. The need to speak in a raised voice choked off the conversationalist and aroused the orator. The gift of brief, trenchant, and relevant response is too rare, and the deep importance of our problem, its utterly uncut and undried character, brought too many ideas, unformed and unstereotyped to the mind. Moreover, men of mature years and intellectual accomplishments have their hobby-horses on which they have ridden for many years and it is not always easy to dismount. Some of these horses were very good but they belonged elsewhere (such as the notion of the widening gap in per capita income between the underdeveloped and the industrial countries); others were worn-out old nags and belonged nowhere (like the contention that political parties are the political vehicles of class interest). But all were trotted out and one of the most spavined aroused much enthusiastic interest and gave rise to excessively prolonged expositions of elementary sociology, true and false. One of the most vigorous and thoughtful interchanges—between John Kenneth Galbraith and Ignazio Silone—would have been more appropriate at an Italo-American Political Science Conference. Then there were the orators. One spoke for over forty-two unscheduled minutes (and with eloquence and profundity) on the theological grounds for the deficient civil spirit in Islam; his intervention, strangely enough, was one of the high points. Others blinded and bored with displays of Oxford Union-cum-political platform virtuosity. Nor did all the impediments to discussion arise from the temptations of rhetoric or the defects of intellect. There was distance between Israeli and Arab which could not be made tractable either by their high personal level or by an otherwise general amiability.



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Still, despite deviations and imperfections, the discussions seem to me to have been extraordinarily serious. It was a dialogue of intellectuals born in or living in Africa and America, Europe and Asia. It was not a dialogue between the Afro-Asian countries and the West. There was never a trace of "the spirit of Bandung" or of an "anti-Bandung" spirit. It was remarkable to see that only once did "the West" come in for disparagement—and then in an expression of the honourable hope that Asia would follow its own political genius. Almost immediately thereafter Prince Kukrit Pramoj of Thailand who had painted a sombre picture of the state of political life in his country following on the effort to establish modern political democracy there (and who himself had expressed the wish that the spirit of Buddhism might enter into the political life of Thailand) replied that such contentions were out of place; there simply could be no denial of the Western origin of political democracy. The prevailing attitude was put very aptly when Cecil Hourani described Mr. Habib Bourguiba as not a "European," nor a "Western man," but as a "modern man."

Rhodes was remarkable for many things. Not the least of these was the small place accorded to the dangers of Communism. Certainly none of the participants was sympathetic with Communism, and none was blind. The main reason seems to me to be that, except for those who have become caught up in the coils of the Communist movement, Marxism has lost its power to attract; it has ceased to be a valid intellectual or moral challenge. Liberal democracy and economic progress seem to be sufficiently worthy objects of commitment, and there is no need to justify them before a competitor whose claims command no respect. Furthermore, there was, I believe, sufficient confidence that economic progress was possible without the use of Soviet methods. While there was no inclination to deny the reality of Russian economic progress, the Soviet model was itself not regarded as an unqualified assurance of such progress. (Raymond Aron cited the economic squalor of East Germany.) Nor was the refusal to be stampeded by the Communist method a product of indifference towards the misery of the lower classes in many of the new states. Many of the members of the seminar were involved in the responsibilities for economic development in their own societies; the conditions and prospects of Communist society evoked no sneaking admiration in them. These were among the reasons why they were not obsessed by it.

I felt, too, that the widespread identity of privately and publicly expressed opinions was rather unusual. On the Western side, there was an altogether exceptional degree of freedom from that disgusting but common mixture of hypocritical admiration and condescension towards the new states; and among those who came from Asia and Africa there was practically no defensiveness, no defiant offensiveness, no cant about ancient and superior wisdom. Even in the solemn and affecting discourse of Mr. Thomas Diop on the vitality of the traditional culture of French West Africa (and the need for its retention in a modern form), his sculptured stateliness of expression was free of any trace of bitter, defensive nativism. Only on one occasion did a Western criticism call forth an injured denial from a national of the country which had been criticised. Men are usually greater patriots abroad than at home; I was glad to note very little of that in the balanced mixture of involvement and detachment which prevailed at Rhodes.

There was, indeed, an atmosphere of a common quest. There was no suggestion that we in the West have solved our problems, and that we knew what the answers were to the problems emerging in Asia and Africa. On the contrary, Raymond Aron and Bertrand de Jouvenel spoke frankly of the vicissitudes of political democracy in France; Ignazio Silone and John Kenneth Galbraith both asserted their dissatisfaction with the party structure of their own countries; and Robert M. Hutchins' critical remarks concerning the United States, trenchantly exaggerated as usual, were only an extreme instance of a more general disposition to examine problems rather than to praise, apologise, or denigrate.

## The Political Society

We began with an unspoken and disquieting problem: Is it reasonable to expect political democracy to take root in Asian and African countries which have not passed through the historical experiences of the established democracies of Europe and America? On the second day in Rhodes, when the party systems were being considered, it became clear that regardless whether there was a two-party system, or a multi-party system, or a system in which there was one preponderant ruling party

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and the numerous opposition parties were not serious contenders for power (as is the case in India and Israel), the really vital problem was whether *the authority of the state* had established itself, whether the population had been transformed from subjects into *citizens*, whether a civil sense had developed which united the population into *a nation*.

FROM time to time the seminar was oppressed by the thought that the new states, which had been created by nationalism, did not rule over nations but over agglomerations of kinship groups and ethnic, religious, caste, and linguistic communities. Indeed so severe did the situation appear that Professor Aron, no proponent of class conflict, said at the end that "a political party system in which parties represented class interests would be an *advance* for many of these countries since class parties would at least represent some approximation to the national integration so lacking from the present scene...." During the first afternoon Mr. Asoka Mehta, his mind always on the central problem, replied to Mr. Strachey's insistence that parties by their nature must represent class interests, by arguing that only politicians in established states could permit themselves the luxury of talking about class interests "fighting things out to a finish." But in a country like India, "the commonly accepted framework" which exists in England (and even in France) does not exist. "We have to strengthen it, and we cannot afford to play the game with the same kind of nonchalance which parliamentarians in the more developed countries are in the habit of doing...."

For several days, the idea of "a civil order" was a troubling, groping assumption, confusedly seeking expression. Then it came dramatically to the surface in a long and brilliant intervention by Mr. Albert Hourani of Magdalen College in which he argued the prior necessity of what he called *"a political society."* The term was never clearly defined; but to those contemplating the disordered conditions in Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia, Thailand, and some of the Arab countries, it was obvious that it referred to a conjunction of moral consensus and the machinery of government; it involved at least the existence of *citizens*, the attachment of the citizens to each other and to some symbols of the entire society, and an effective government.

The consensus might be born out of awareness of a common language, of a common body of cultural and religious traditions; it might be a communion of tradition arising from common experiences in a common territory. Whatever its source, the consensus would have to include "a sense of common nationality." Where the nation did not exist, it would have to be created —because the will to belong to a nation has a "profound legitimacy" which the Asians and Africans took for granted. What of the excesses of fanatical nationalism? They were apparently "the terrible frenzy" which explodes when nationalistic sentiment (as in the Arab world) finds no crystallisation in an organised political society.

No less important than consensus for the creation of the civil order, are a stable and effective machinery of government, a strong political leadership, and an able and respected judiciary. The travail of a new state without a well-qualified civil service was sadly portrayed by the Indonesian, Mr. Sjahrir, and the contrast between Indonesia and countries like India and Ghana which have the good fortune to have inherited (and to have maintained) outstanding civil services, was apparent to all.

A *constitution*, extending its power over the whole country and capable of enforcing itself by the authority of those who spoke on its behalf, is a necessary part of "the political society." Robert Hutchins, in the midst of a characteristic excoriation of American education, revealed the underlying unity of the problems of free societies everywhere, with the assertion that "the greatest educational institution in the United States is the American Constitution." "It instructs the citizens concerning the nature of their society and trains them to live under its laws." M. de Jouvenel put the same thesis differently when he said that one of the chief tasks of the new states is to establish *"majesty,"* that relationship between the government and the citizens in which the rulers believe they are governing "for the whole society" and the citizens believe in the moral concern and competence of their rulers. Where the rulers failed to establish their competence and their moral integrity and to meet reasonable expectations of the populace, democratic government would be discredited, and liberal oligarchies, aspiring towards democracy, would make no progress towards representative government. Corruption in government is pernicious not so much because of its wastefulness but because it discredits government, and gives it the air of injustice which

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causes those whom it rules to withhold affection and loyalty. In consequence, "the political gap," the estrangement between rulers and ruled, is widened, and no political society can emerge.

The enthusiasm of the members of the seminar to reiterate well-known theses on economic development and political democracy necessitated the omission of the session on "The Rule of Law and Public Liberties." Nonetheless the Rule of Law repeatedly engaged the seminar which saw it as more than a mere instrument for the protection of individual rights and civil liberties, or a part of the conventional baggage of traditional liberalism. It was regarded rather as an indispensable means for creating a political society within which men and women could become citizens of a national state and, thus, provide a framework for the more or less effective working of representative institutions.

## The Dilemma

SEVERAL years ago, at Milan, I observed a great gallery of leading intellectuals discussing freedom and democracy for days but avoiding all critical analyses of the effectiveness of representative institutions. At Rhodes they were given a much more ample opportunity to discuss "Parliaments, Parties, and Politicians." Again, vivid interest could not be aroused. At the very beginning, M. Bertrand de Jouvenel set the stage for a devaluation of the representative institutions of modern states. Both he and Dr. Daya Krishna asserted that there could be no "government by the people" and in a way they expressed the spirit of what was to come. Both John Strachey and Hugh Gaitskell claimed for the party system that it offered the citizen "a choice of policies," but neither argued that the alternatives offered had much substantive affinity to the desires of the electorate. Both Prince Pramoj and Dr. Maung Maung spoke with melancholy and sardonic humour of the tatterdemalion condition of the representative institutions of Thailand and Burma. Dr. Hussain stressed the low esteem in which politicians are held in Pakistan. Even Asoka Mehta, himself surely one of the most estimable parliamentarians alive, acknowledged the widespread dissatisfaction with the quality of politicians in India. The only member of the seminar who offered specific suggestions for making representative institutions more representative, Raghavan Iyer of St. Antony's College, laid equal stress on the poor quality of Indian parliamentarians and on the low esteem in which they are held. Minoo Masani, in one of his numerous sparkling interventions, took a constructive outlook but his suggestions for improving the quality of *actual* participation consisted in recommendations for increasing the *sense* of participation in politics. The repeated emphasis on the need for "a *sense* of participation" is, I suspect, a consequence of a certain scepticism about ever improving the quality of *actual* popular participation in representative governmental institutions.

Not that anyone claimed this was undesirable. On the contrary. But actual participation seems so constricted by the scope of modern large-scale society that it appears almost unrealisable. (Judge Wyzansky asserted that it actually existed in the political life of the United States, but no one else claimed that for his own or any other country, and Raymond Aron argued that even in the United States it was more "a national ideology" and less an actual fact.) Poverty, illiteracy, and hierarchy were the great obstacles to actual participation in the new states. The formation of a coherent society, the liberation of the individual and his protection from the State were all given priority over the improvement of actual participation.

The foremost problem was declared by Mr. Albert Hourani to be

> how can we save liberal individual values when representative democratic institutions do not work?

M. Aron formulated it differently when he said that

> the party system is not the most important aspect of democracy. The essential aspect is to prevent regimentation. This requires constitutional government, the rule of law, and the possibility of discussion.

Michael Polanyi aimed at the same conclusion with his statement that

> public liberties are the heart of democracy. The rule of law is its muscular framework. And a democratically-elected government forms a dynamic centre for improving the laws by which men live in a free society. Elective self-government is the final, most difficult achievement of democracy and not—as often seems to be assumed—the first step towards democracy.... You cannot define a free society by rules of procedure.

Was it an accident, therefore, that much of the discussion of parties did not refer to the problems of political parties in the new states?

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So many went down the path of digression so eagerly, or so willingly—because they could not quite find a place in their affections for political parties, and because they had no more than a lukewarm belief in the value of parties. I came away with the impression that with the exception of Masani and Mehta, there was a general sense that parties are often not "real," that they too often are the vehicles of small cliques or narrow sectional interests, and parliamentary life lacks inherent persuasiveness and authority.

RHODES floundered where Milan had averted its mind—on the peculiar dilemma of modern political thought which regards a democratic legitimation of public authority as the only one which is acceptable, while it can think of no better way to implement that legitimacy than through representative institutions which no intellectual really loves. Anything less than universal suffrage could find no willing ear (as the lively response to Mr. Masani's very tentative question showed). But the institutions through which universal suffrage expresses itself—political parties, professional politicians, and parliamentary activity—called forth even less interest and enthusiasm.

No one would proclaim the wisdom of the people (although their sober common-sense on matters close to their experience was affirmed and the significance of their illiteracy generally minimised). No one would declare that there was an identity of the people and their elected representatives. Thus, "democratic sovereignty" could only find its chief expression in surveillance and criticism of government. What really engages sentiments and affections is "opposition" and, perhaps, "responsible criticism." The problem of safeguarding the right of opposition is one which is congenial to the liberalism generated by the shattering experiences of the established and the nascent democracies in the West and in Asia and Africa in recent years. This occasioned some of the most sober reflections of the actual proceedings.

Critical opposition was regarded as a more effective way of making government "representative" than the conventional institutions of representation. Critical opposition was, accordingly, a means of restraining governmental action and of pushing its action along the right path. Both socialists and critics of socialism were here united. Professor Gadgil, with all the austere fervour of his lofty intelligence, asserted that in the planned economy to which he was committed, intelligent criticism was necessary at every level and at every stage. Minoo Masani (whose economic liberalism called down the laboured scorn of Mr. Strachey and the friendly admonitions of Professors Galbraith and Myrdal) naturally stressed the need for critical opposition "not to undo what has already been done in any given plan, but to assure that errors in one plan do not occur in subsequent plans...." The press was charged with the same responsibility by Mr. V. K. Narasimhan, an editor of *The Hindu* (Madras), and a very lively spokesman for the sophisticated South Indian variety of liberalism. Only Asoka Mehta took a somewhat different view, because of his anguished consciousness of the fragility of even the most stable of the political societies in the new states. "If the Congress Government fails it will be the failure of political democracy in India." No alternative democratic government was likely. Underdeveloped countries, moreover, stand in a more compelling need of consensus than advanced countries. The tasks which necessity imposes on new governments and the urgency of eliciting popular support for the government in its great undertakings both call for a more far-reaching harmony. Excessive criticism and irresponsible opposition might stir the passions of a captious and already divided people and destroy the tenuous consensus on which Indian political society rests. Thus Mehta felt the need to moderate criticism of the Congress Government. At the same time he saw the terrible prospect of a disintegration of the Congress Party in a situation without an effective democratic opposition party which could provide an alternative government! Professor Aron had said earlier that "it might well be that the best form of party system for a new state was for one vastly preponderant party to govern, while the opposition parties were only pressure groups or lobbies but not forces large enough to threaten to take over the Government...." Mr. Mehta, in the opposition himself, could not agree with this. Although he saw the need to hold in check criticism of such a governing party (*e.g.*, the Congress Party in India), he thought it inevitable, especially in the light of what Dr. Maung Maung reported about U Nu's party in Burma and what Professor Hussain reported about the fate of the Muslim League in Pakistan, that such great parties were bound to disintegrate.

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Then where would democracy be? The military coup in Pakistan, of which news came to us one afternoon during the seminar, was the kind of answer one could expect. He also suggested, as did Dr. Maung Maung, that "it was conceivable that the military might succeed in providing a framework for public liberties, and then for representative institutions, where the politicians had failed."

## The Deep Dark Regions

How can a "political society" be created? On the first day, even we were made explicitly aware of the "pre-political" malaise of the new states, the question was opened around the awkward term "infra-structure." It was introduced by Dr. Gunnar Myrdal to refer to the complex network of civic and interest organisations, co-operative societies, independent local authorities, trade unions, trade associations, autonomous universities, professional bodies, citizens' associations for civic purposes, and philanthropic groups, through which a participation more effective than that afforded by the usual institutions of representative government could be achieved. He quite rightly pointed out that the absence of such an elaborate "infra-structure" constitutes a great enfeeblement of democracy in the new states. In one form or another, the notion introduced by Mr. Myrdal kept coming back into the discussion. When Mr. Albert Hourani introduced the idea of "political society," *infra-structure* found its proper place. It came to be seen as an essential part of a political society which sought to control abuses of power and which, even though it allowed much power to the government, retained the right to re-direct the use of that power, to withdraw it, and above all, to restrain it. The "pluralistic theory"—which had, over the years, degenerated into a figment of antiquated syllabi of University courses in Government and Political Science—acquired a new and a better life in its relevance to the formation of a political society.

Coming at the matter in a different way, Mr. Ogunsheye, with the weighty eloquence of the reasonable man, laid stress on the need to develop what the traditional societies *already* possess—although he did not gainsay the need to create new institutions as well. His interest was directed to the manner in which traditions already existent in the old societies of Asia and Africa can be *reshaped* to provide bases for a stable modern democratic order. With even more concreteness than that which characterised a seminar full of the feeling of first-hand experience, he described the many ways in which this is happening in Nigeria, carefully avoiding the traditionalism which finds everything currently desirable in one's own past. The papers submitted by Dr. Panikkar and Mr. Diop developed the same theme with respect to their own societies; Professor Gadgil added other instances of the manner in which, by a judicious selection, the inheritance of an old society is being reinterpreted.

Asoka Mehta, Professor Gadgil, Professor Shaffaq, and Prince Pramoj each touched with suggestive gravity on the persisting religious vitality of their own countries as a seed from which the attachment to something transcending the family, the locality, the caste, and the kinship or linguistic group, might grow to the point where it would unify the countries, at present so disunited internally. Asoka Mehta felt that, in the last analysis, the resurgent spirit necessary for the creation of political society must come ultimately from "the deep dark region of the spirit." Albert Hourani concluded a hastily composed lecture (a fantastic achievement of erudition and eloquence) with the contention that "any political society stood in need of an ultimately theological foundation, a belief in some transcendent intrinsically valid end, a common attachment to which could give rise to a mutual attachment among the citizens. . . ."

This was the passionately felt urgency: some enhancement of the social unity of the new states. Yet, at every turn, there was an equal awareness of the need and rightfulness of diversity. Professor Gadgil, who spoke so forcefully for the need for unity, also expounded the dangers of excessive unity. The dialectic of consensus and dissensus, of unity and diversity, constantly emerged, not as contradictory contentions but as a perpetual challenge to achieve balance amidst the most disruptive difficulties.

Thus our discussion moved, by fits and starts and leaping digressions, from the more external things of political democracy to its deeper preconditions. I regret that it did not make an equal progress towards the moral fundamentals in terms of which the democratic society can be justified and which, in fact, are not only the ends but also the necessary bases of that society. I refer particularly to the reluctance to venture into the domain of *individuality*.

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# The Don and the Peasant

*"FREEDOM for an Oxford don," others have been known to add, "is a very different thing from freedom for an Egyptian peasant."*

*This proposition derives its force from something that is both true and important, but the phrase itself remains a piece of political claptrap. It is true that to offer political rights, or safeguards against intervention by the State, to men who are half-naked, illiterate, underfed, and diseased is to mock their condition; they need medical help or education before they can understand, or make use of, an increase in their freedom. First things come first: there are situations, as a 19-century Russian radical writer declared, in which boots are superior to the works of Shakespeare; individual freedom is not everyone's primary need. For freedom is not the mere absence of frustration of whatever kind; this would inflate the meaning of the word until it meant too much or too little. The Egyptian peasant needs clothes or medicine before, and more than, personal liberty, but the minimum freedom that he needs to-day, and the greater degree of freedom that he may need to-morrow, is not some species of freedom peculiar to him, but identical with that of professors, artists, and millionaires.*

*What troubles the consciences of Western liberals is not, I think, the belief that the freedom that men seek differs according to their social or economic conditions, but that the minority who possess it have gained it by exploiting or, at least, averting their gaze from the vast majority who do not. They believe, with good reason, that if individual liberty is an ultimate end for human beings, none should be deprived of it by others; least of all that some should enjoy it at the expense of others. Equality of liberty; not to treat others as I should not wish them to treat me; repayment of my debt to those who alone have made possible my liberty or prosperity or enlightenment; justice, in its simplest and most universal sense—these are the foundations of liberal morality. Liberty is not the only goal of men. I can, like the Russian critic Belinsky, say that if others are to be deprived of it—if my brothers are to remain in poverty, squalor, and chains—then I do not want it for myself, I reject it with both hands, and infinitely prefer to share their fate. But nothing is gained by a confusion of terms. To avoid glaring inequality or widespread misery, I am ready to sacrifice some, or all, of my freedom: I may do so willingly and freely: but it is freedom that I am giving up for the sake of justice or equality or the love of my fellow men. I should be guilt-stricken, and rightly so, if I were not, in some circumstances, ready to make this sacrifice. But a sacrifice is not an increase in what is being sacrificed, namely freedom, however great the moral need or the compensation for it.*

*Everything is what it is: liberty is liberty, not equality or fairness or justice or human happiness or a quiet conscience. If the liberty of myself or my class or nation depends on the misery of a vast number of other human beings, the system which promotes this is unjust and immoral. But if I curtail or lose my freedom, in order to lessen the shame of such inequality, and do not thereby materially increase the individual liberty of others, an absolute loss of liberty occurs. This may be compensated for by a gain in justice or in happiness, or in peace, but the loss remains, and it is nothing but a confusion of values to say that although my "liberal," individual freedom may go by the board, some other kind of freedom—"social" or "economic"—is increased. But it remains true that the freedom of some must at times be curtailed to secure the freedom of others. Upon what principle should this be done? If freedom is a sacred, untouchable value, there can be no such absolute principle.*

ISAIAH BERLIN, "TWO CONCEPTS OF LIBERTY" (Oxford, 1958)

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The need to arouse and nurture the individuality of the ordinary members of the traditional societies of the new states was not disregarded. There was mention of "universal suffrage as a means of arousing men from their torpor." And on the last day, in his concluding remarks, Asoka Mehta, with his characteristically deep and utterly unhistrionic moral earnestness, returned to the same point.

> Unless democracy can vitalise the people, can release their energies . . . it will be lifeless. . . . The basic thing is not democracy but the ability to stir the people, to move the people, to release their energies, their *élan*, their enthusiasm.

M. Bertrand de Jouvenel by his praise of a state which assured men of "freedom to initiate and carry through courses of action" had opened the way to the consideration of "what kinds of men would be disposed to initiate," and the conditions under which they are created. No one took it up. Judge Charles Wyzansky reminded everybody that the end of democratic order is the production of "a rich and vital individual existence." This was not affirmed, nor even remarked. Mr. Cecil Hourani told of the effort of the Tunisian Government "to create individual human beings" by means of social legislation which sought to destroy the traditional institutions repressive of their individuality. And Mr. Ogunsheye looked for guidance into the ways in which "individuality could emerge from the traditional collectivism of African tribal life." Yet these numerous beginnings were never taken up for fuller discussion. It ended there, at the frontier of the deep dark region.

## The Paradox

THE paradox of Rhodes was this. It was agreed that "strong government" is necessary and that meant strong leadership by dominating personalities and a powerful and able civil service. It was agreed, in two lively sessions, that economic development is an absolute necessity for the survival and growth of democracy, and that could not be achieved without a good deal of decisive government action. The "mixed system" of economic development, on which there was general agreement, would call for vigorous governmental measures. The diffusion of the knowledge and instruments of birth control is necessary—also universal elementary education and universities of a good standard—also co-operative organisation in agriculture and research in technology—also the protection of the rights of the obscure and the poor.

At present *Government* is the chief agency of which men think, for achieving any public end, particularly in the new states. How then can the "infra-structure"—that unlovely term which most of the members despised and nearly all used—be developed? It must be developed by state aid. How can the populace be aroused from its torpor? It must be aroused by education financed by the State. How can individuality be liberated and formed? It must be freed from its bondage to tradition by legislation. How can independent intellectuals, with high standards, be selected and trained? They must be trained in universities supported by the State. How can agricultural co-operatives be encouraged? They must receive financial aid from the State and their officials must be given a rudimentary training in book-keeping by the State. And so it goes.

This *dependence on Government to create a society which will be able to act independently of government* naturally creates misgivings. The inherent difficulty of a strong government to guide itself by self-denying and self-restraining ordinances is evident enough. It is especially so when, even at their best (as in India), the institutions of public opinions are ineffectual. The press, though financially independent (and well-staffed at the top), reaches only a very small part of the population, and that mostly urban. The best of the press has too little of a tradition of energetic reporting, and its capacities for independent scrutiny of government policy are too often confined to its leader writers. Moreover, government, even when they have a genuine will to be democratic, do not take the press very seriously. The universities enjoy little general esteem; they are wholly dependent on government for financial support, and their staffs generally live in isolation from the larger community, and have no influence on it. (This difficult situation is, moreover, a luxury available only to those more fortunate countries which already form rudimentary political societies. In certain countries, notably in the Arab states, public opinion lives in the cafés and in student societies, and provides no helpful criticism but only tumultuous threats.)

For all these tasks, which the democratic governments in the new states must undertake, qualified and devoted persons are scarce. The government draws most of the best into its service. This leaves on the outside only a handful

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to carry the responsibilities of forming a critical public opinion and to help in the formation of the "infra-structure."

And are the most talented young men seeking political careers in parties and parliaments? Hardly. A very saddening phenomenon which afflicts the new countries—Rhodes did not demur—is the disaffection from party politics. The most vigorous of the intellectually endowed and highly educated go into administration, science, technology, teaching, journalism, and even into industry when the rewards are high enough, but *politics*—"party politics"—put them off. So it is that political parties in all democratic countries—and the parliament which no one loves and no one would displace—is unattractive in tone and defective in quality.

Our own reluctances were symbolic of a profound danger. At present democracy lives—to the extent that it is alive—in the new states because the political leadership of those states (maintained in power by the prestige which it won in "the struggle for freedom") is devoted to democracy. It is sustained in that devotion by a small circle of educated persons. When that small number of great personalities passes from the scene, who will then carry the will to maintain and create a free society?

By and large, the hope of Rhodes was for "a transition period." Recently-planted traditions, married to a selection of carefully adapted older traditions, would carry a new state, an old country, into the circumstances of a political society. From there, with the awakening of individual powers, the network of autonomous civic life would be inspired and established. And then, from this, the will to participate through representative institutions would come into life. Would, however, the neglect of representative institutions and the consequent disrepute of the whole system of political democracy which includes the constitution, the rule of law and public liberties, as well as parties, parliaments, and opposition, allow the former to persist when the latter atrophy (or are suspended)?

## Cheerful Pessimists

No one at Rhodes was optimistic. During that week the Army seized power in Pakistan, and the civil war broke out again in Lebanon. Yet, no one believed that democracy in the new states was doomed to die. As Raymond Aron put it (at the end of a scintillating conspectus delivered on the last day) the mood in which we must face the future is one of "cheerful pessimism." On what grounds?

In part: the sobriety of judgment and the realism of aspiration which the best intellectuals of the new countries displayed with such impressiveness at Rhodes (and in which they are certainly not alone in their own countries). Furthermore: nearly every one of the participants from Asia and Africa was, in his own country, devoted to some practical task in politics, research, administration, or journalism, the responsibilities of which freed his mind from the winds of doctrine. There appeared to be a growing concreteness of grasp, and an impressive freedom from schematic, rigid conceptions. There was no belief in "one ideal model" of political democracy. Those persons, who see the struggle for representative government and public liberties in the new states as an effort by "Westernised" intellectuals to impose an abstractly conceived, rigidly applied pattern of government in traditional societies," would have been disabused of their error. I myself was impressed by the firm tie of appreciation and sympathy which bound these Afro-Asian intellectuals to their own people. Their contributions were entirely free from the populistic cant which praises "the people" but which is without a genuine identification with the round of daily life in which the ordinary people live. These in themselves were tremendous things.

The remoter origin of the seminar at Rhodes, as I said at the beginning, lay in my own studies in India. These had been instigated by the desire to learn of the extent to which the responsibilities of freedom had enabled the intellectuals of the new states to transcend the oppositional mentality and the doctrinaire outlook which were necessary features of the revolutionary struggle for freedom from foreign rule. I had also been concerned with the extent to which the intellectuals of the newly-sovereign states (themselves the heirs of modern culture, acquired through the West) felt themselves *at home* in their own societies, felt an intimate affinity with their own people? Rhodes was a resounding answer—an answer more important than the original question. At any rate, in that answer lay the grounds for the cheerful dynamic pessimism or, more precisely, the sober indomitable good-will with which the future is being faced in the old societies, so heroically seeking to transform themselves into free and modern states.

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*Herbert Read*

# Vocal Avowals

NOTES FOR A PREFACE: *'You don't write sonnets with ideas, but with words'* (*Mallarmé*)

*Only relatively few words are poetical, and these must be organised poetically.*

*Syntax is the great destroyer of poetic values.*

*All inflections are suspect. The poverty of the present participle.*

*'The poem universe aims at total independence"* (*Elizabeth Sewell*)

*Sentiments are—sentimental. "A feeling that is enjoyed by the owner is a stale fingered flower". (P. M. Møller)*

*Recipe: drop a syllable into a state of pure consciousness and listen for the reverberations.*

**hot rod**

vellum list fell dole
packed pendulum red roar
esteem wet spindle
auricular thy lung
scut thews cold selvage
out angular out out odd
yet not

**little war**

geometric my alkahest
migrant fists passion vale
flash high o paraclete
all violet vast
eyelashes entelechy
stone water-swords
white shock



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## fellow men

sharl rumble enlist while
crumble distress coarse foal
belt so wormeaten whine
wold zithers wet fear

rode alabastrine sheer built
till install aisle coomb
vivid surrender up black
up cry up coign

in lily lake tangents
zion wonder and wound
cusped blood tellurian
transit illicit wild

wry fling test modesty
fell yolk
folk mold
goddam yellow

## fur matrix

lob west weld needle
seed slight blue suck
settle far consecrate
white angel wistful

margaret melt
anvil muster for
wonderfully far
black mutter

rose llama
lustra syndrome
tell pelvic tell tower
matrix murmur

## mason bee

melon vulvular vest
tax tintagel
try tone lax sigh
archangel fore lost
may duke may die
well rent infest
oak eye

## or organ

simply say softly well welter
tennis effort ex- if not
lustless bones thy river
red snow repeat milk sting
stagger hock cry cluster
oosh and then curls wait
sweat sweet silver wheat
white lintel
o'er

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# *Two Poems by Geoffrey Grigson*

## Euridyce

Yellow, wrinkled poppies
Wild in rain
At that gnarled entrance
To the past of men:

Its funnel in the mountain
Sloped, slid down,
Was choked far down by blue,
By bluest mist
Or sediment of air.

Eurydice and I at last
Down there,
See by the gurgling lamp,
Upon the house-sized
Smooth-faced crag
Dropped from the roof
Across the blackest cave,
Life-high, hands high,

Waiting, not dead, and blood
Not dried, ten thousand, then
Ten thousand years again,
The painted gravid mare
Of dreamings, kindred, prey,
In red and pride. We pass.

Twitter and stench
Of urinating bats;
Rise, slope, then rise.
I turn. She leaves me now.
Twilight untwists my eyes,
The light comes green,
The cavern mist comes blue:
Past the damp dung of cattle

I emerge alone, and see again
The yellow poppies
Wrinkled in the rain.



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## Stockholm in November

*In the Kungsträd Garden*

No sun explodes against the gilt,
There is no water, this fountain
Does not spring, these metal swans
Ride dry; and plank by plank
A summer exhibition is unbuilt.

It is near winter and this king declares,
On rock ground down by ice, he is a Roman king.
His grey sword cuts his own
Sky of grey time, which is
Extremely wide. He says (as if
It was not clear) he is the Absolute
Of Pride, and skins less white
Than white go by;
And flatnesses how wide, how wide
Of salt cold wrinkled lead,
Cold, wrinkled, lead, uphold
These ochre flattened palaces.

Bronze swans, you ride so dry,
Uncoloured skins, you walk by like the dead,
And you are dead as well, bronze king,
Though you are Rome and Pride,
In parallels your sky is infinite,
Heavy, and wide. And though
The pinnacles are gilt, I mark
How plank by plank
This exhibition of a summer's now
Unbuilt.

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# Sigmund Freud and Havelock Ellis

## *The Dialogue and the Debate—By VINCENT BROME*

AT A VERY advanced stage of the subtle relationship which developed between these two men Freud burst out in exasperation one day, "It's not so much Havelock Ellis' ignorance that matters—it's his knowing so many things that are not so." Driven to this attack by the tenacity with which Ellis insisted that Freud underestimated the heredity factors in homosexuality, his words never went beyond the walls of Freud's study, but left a sardonic echo in the memory of Ernest Jones who decided to exclude them from his *Life of Freud*. With that devotion to the Master which introduced a suspicion of bias into Jones' attitude towards Freud, Jones was disdainful of the relationship between Freud and Ellis and spoke explosively of any attempt to associate the English "seer" with his Viennese counterpart.

Looking back over the years it is possible to establish identities between Ellis and Freud as remarkable as the differences on which they finally split. Socially and scientifically their backgrounds were opposed, but both came to medicine in the same decade with some apprehension, both had no special sense of vocation, and Freud frequently wished "that he could retire from medical practice and devote himself to unravelling cultural problems," a desire close to the heart of Havelock Ellis.

> After forty-one years of medical activity, my self-knowledge tells me that I have never really been a doctor in the proper sense. I became a doctor through being compelled to deviate from my original purpose; and the triumph of my life lies in my having, after a long and roundabout journey, found my way back to my earlier path.

Written by Freud about himself, it roughly described what happened to Havelock Ellis.

Freud's early student days were little more distinguished than Ellis'. Of his first rigorosum in chemistry, botany, and zoology, he said, "I escaped disaster only through the clemency of fate or that of my examiners," and in general medicine he came through, like Ellis, as merely satisfactory. It needed a philanthropic patron to sustain Freud in his medical studies, as Miss Caroline Haddon made possible the completion of Ellis' training. Freud's state of chronic poverty persisted for years, and if, unlike the poverty of Ellis, it prevented his marrying the woman of his choice for a painfully prolonged period, it was not, in the end, quite so enduring. A visit to Paris and the Salpêtrière in October 1885 deeply influenced Freud's medical career as Ellis' Parisian expedition in 1884 influenced his; and they both met and absorbed the teachings of Charcot, the French pioneer psychiatrist.

"In reading through the tremendous story I have outlined here one apprehends above all how mighty were the passions that animated Freud and how unlike he was in reality to the calm scientist he is often depicted..." Ernest Jones wrote in his definitive *Life of Freud*, and once again the hidden stresses and passions of Ellis reciprocated. The legend that Freud preserved a masterful grip on life sailing serenely through every difficulty, was as false as the story of Ellis' unfailing composure. "However unpalatable the idea may be to hero-worshippers, the truth has to be stated..." wrote Jones of Freud. "There is ample evidence that for ten years or so—roughly comprising the nineties—he suffered from a very considerable psychoneurosis...." So, in my belief, did Ellis. His extravagant shyness, stomach disorders, the case which will be presented for a form of impotence and something beyond impotence, are not easily



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dismissed as "normal" within the commonplace meaning of the word.

In person, both were handsome men, temperamentally inclined to work in isolation, but identities crumble at this point and it is impossible to confuse the mystical abstractions of Havelock Ellis with the austerities of Freud's intellectual life. Nearly six-feet tall with a cathedral calm in his bearing, a silken white beard and magnificent head, Ellis carried himself with a natural grace, and many a visitor was left breathless by the splendour of his person when he answered a knock on the door of his impoverished Brixton flat. The voice coming from this vision was unexpected, sounding high and slightly harsh, and the handshake never went beyond a limp and uncertain clasp. There was something feminine in the beauty of Ellis' face. Its soft, gracious lines unmarked far into life were partly the result of the poet in him, partly inborn graciousness and partly the deliberate cultivation of an open countenance. He would study his face at length in the mirror in an attempt to anticipate and remedy any premature hardening. Behind the wonderful presence there were many mysterious forces of which among his close friends he made no concealment. It seemed absurd that a man who had brought living to such graceful perfection should suddenly unbend and admit that appalling indigestion made public life a torment.

WITH Freud it was all very different. The power of his presence gave the illusion of height to his person but he was in fact barely five feet seven inches. His flashing eyes and fine moustaches added a panache quite alien to Ellis. Less feminine, more virile, and capable of a ruthlessness quite beyond Ellis, Freud was destined to grow into normal family life with several children and a conventionally devoted wife. He followed a path remote from the tortured labyrinth which engulfed Ellis who married a woman with Lesbian tendencies, had no children, and watched his wife slip towards lunacy.

The motives which drove Freud and Ellis away from normal medicine into sex psychology differed as widely as their developing family backgrounds. In so far as his own doctrines allowed, Freud could be said to be gripped by intellectual curiosity and the excitement of medical discovery. Happily married, there was no *evident* sexual disturbance to drive him into tortured investigations of sex. Inspired by Charcot's description of his method—"to stare at the facts over and over again until they spoke to him," he developed his technique of free association from Charcot's principle of catharsis and became deeply interested in the famous case of Anna, whose psychoneuroses were violent and unnumbered. At no stage did pathological preoccupations fire Freud to investigate his own personal sexual problems.

Something very different was true of Ellis. Bewildered by savage contradictions between his own sexuality and the moral codes of Victorian England he was just sixteen years old when he solemnly averred that unravelling the mysteries of sex would become his life's work, and it is difficult to believe that this happened by accident. Certainly another and far more convincing case can be made out which begins, classically, back in those early days of family life, when Ellis, like many homosexuals, was forced into a one-sided relationship with his mother, his father, a captain, spending long years at sea. Four sisters were added to the family over the next few years and no brother. The intensity of his mother's erotic reactions towards him are recorded by Ellis in his own autobiography, *My Life*. In young manhood his nature and temperament bore all the signs of that soft femininity, lacking normal aggression, which might have resulted from a completely feminine upbringing. If, as modern psychology believes, we are all, in some degree, bi-sexual, every accident of environment in childhood coincided to develop that potential in Ellis, and in early manhood he found the company of homosexuals sympathetic, becoming close friends with Edward Carpenter. With the appearance of the woman he first loved—Olive Schreiner—"who, in my humble opinion [writes Françoise Delisle in *Friendship's Odyssey*], refused a lover relationship with him because he was not sufficiently virile . . ." she may have taken the place of his mother and rendered normal relations difficult if not impossible. He also told Olive Schreiner "something" which he could not even bring himself to record in his private diary. When he came to marry Edith Lees, complications of a more serious kind supervened. Mme Delisle believed that ". . . . his wife Edith . . . prevented him from asserting his virility and thereby maimed it for years—it might have been for good." It seems more likely that Ellis' lack of virility merely brought to light Edith Lees' innate Lesbianism. Mme Delisle who lived with Ellis for many years wrote in *Friendship's Odyssey*, of her own relations with him: ". . . On the first day I foolishly expected the marital act I had so far known. . . . There was, therefore, a slight dread when this did not happen. . . ."

Acknowledging the chief character in his wife's novel *Seaweed* (a miner rendered impotent by accident) as himself, Ellis added fresh links to a chain which achieved greater

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certainty from this phrase in a letter to Mme Delisle.... "But there is not one to whom I am a real lover. I don't ever want to be... as a lover or a husband you would find me very disappointing." Hugh de Selincourt's evidence followed, and as a man who knew Ellis intimately for twenty-five years it cannot easily be brushed aside. It became profoundly ironic for one who wrote so much of the necessity for reproducing the right kind of people, not to reproduce himself.

So it was that Ellis was driven to investigate not merely the nature of homosexuality, but the whole gigantic pattern of sexual behaviour, the contradictions of his own nature becoming the wellspring of his life's work. Speculation about repressed homosexuality is an easy indulgence but if Ellis did not suffer from this over-fashionable complaint there were certainly many occasions when his virility could be called in question.

With such divergent motives, Freud and Ellis broke into the conspiracy of silence about sex which choked investigation in the late 19th century. Breuer and Freud's preliminary paper, *The Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomenon* (1893), said that hysteria was not the result of heredity or degeneracy but of psychic trauma. Expanded into a book (*Studien über Hysterie*, published in 1895), it made available to the medical world Freud's discoveries and the techniques he practised. In those difficult days when Freud's approach was still under attack, Ellis in Volume One of his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* endorsed some of his conclusions and anticipated others. He endorsed the part played by sexual emotions in hysteria—indeed he traced clear origins of the theory back to a French physician, Charles Lepois, who flourished in 1618—and saw some aspects of religion as derivative from sex. "It would be easy," he wrote, "to bring forward a long series of observations, from the most various points of view, to show the wide recognition of this close affinity between the sexual and the religious emotions." A wealth of evidence followed from the early Christian Fathers and Aquinas to Spurgeon who pointedly remarked in one of his sermons that "... by a strange, yet natural law, excess of spirituality is next door to sensuality."

Ellis did not claim religious sexuality as a discovery of his own. A literary scholar of incomparably greater range than Freud, he acknowledged the priority of Swift's "Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit" in which a similar relationship was clear: "Persons of a visionary devotion, either men or women, are, in their complexion, of all others the most amorous...." Beyond sexual influences in art and religion, Volume One described infantile sexuality, and it is a moot point who was first in this field. Time and again the dating becomes very subtle and it might be worth investigating the month as well as year but for the fact that both men would have shrugged their shoulders at such pedantic niceties.

Providing some of the sources from which Freud built his mighty postulates, Ellis did not share what he regarded as Freud's monosexual view of the universe, and it is interesting that he appeared to misinterpret Freud from the outset. He wrote in the *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*:

> "The sexual impulse is not the sole root of the most massive human emotions, the most brilliant human aptitudes—of sympathy, of art, of religion. In the complex human organism, where all the parts are so many-fibred and so closely interwoven, no great manifestation can be reduced to one single source. But it largely enters into and moulds all of these emotions and aptitudes, and that by virtue of its two most peculiar characteristics...."

It was, Ellis continued, "the deepest and most volcanic of human impulses," but unlike the nutritive impulse, "the only other human impulse with which it can be compared," sex may "to a large extent, be transmuted into a new force capable of the strangest and most various uses...." Nowhere, so far as I could trace, did Ellis acknowledge that Freud, too, saw the need to eat as an instinct no less fundamental than sex, a point ironically obvious to the veriest layman.

In the end, of course, Freud's main work was based on his own cases but for the moment he took considerable heed of Ellis. In 1899 Freud was forty-three; his father had died a few years before, and his monumental work *Die Traumdeutung* (The Interpretation of Dreams) was about to appear. In 1899 Ellis was forty; his father still lived, but two volumes of his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* were launched and another half-written. Each man was aware of and interested in the work of the other.

On January 3rd, 1899, Freud wrote to his friend Wilhelm Fliess:

> "... A pleasing thing which I meant to write to you about yesterday is something from Gibraltar, from Mr. Havelock Ellis, an author who concerns himself with the subject of sex and is obviously a highly intelligent man, as is shown by his paper in the *Alienist and Neurologist* (October, 1898), which deals with the connection between hysteria and sexual life, beginning with Plato and ending with Freud. He gives a good deal of credit to the latter, and writes a very intelligent appreciation of *Studies in Hysteria* and later publications...."

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Close on the heels of what was chronologically the second volume of the *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, came another important essay from Ellis entitled "The Stuff that Dreams Are Made Of." It was important because it appeared almost simultaneously with Freud's monumental *Interpretation of Dreams* in 1899, and revealed, once more, unconscious identities in the paths they pursued.

Intuitively aware that somewhere at the heart of every dream lay mysteries which might reveal untold psychological secrets, Ellis had kept a record of dreams from the days of his medical studies, and steadily worked his way through a mass of recorded material. His attempts at interpretation had points of coincidence with Freud's, but their general approach differed widely. The study of dreams, Ellis wrote, "reveals to us an archaic world of vast emotions and imperfect thoughts," anticipating (according to Houston Peterson) Freud's principle of primitive patterns in dream thinking. "The psychic activities that are awake most intensely are those that sleep most profoundly," was again pure Freud. But there, very largely, coincidence stops, and Freud, sweeping away into grandiose concepts, enters a different order of thinking from Ellis and leaves him still fumbling with the facts incapable of those brilliant imaginative flights which eventually humbled Breuer himself.

CORRESPONDENCE between the two men began in the late nineties.* Freud wrote to Ellis on June 27th, 1912. The letter is in the Yale University collection.

It revealed that Freud had a portrait of Ellis on the wall of his study and admitted that when Freud came to return the compliment and search for a photograph to send Ellis, some small touch of vanity made him reject the picture he found, in favour of an old plaquette which he thought a better likeness. It was interesting to find the Master admitting a suspicion of vanity in his ruthlessly scientific outlook.

In the same year came *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, the introduction to which commented on "the remarkable volumes of Havelock Ellis...." Thereafter there were recurring acknowledgements to the work of Ellis, and presently Freud wrote:

> "Havelock Ellis, in an appendix to his study on the *Sexual Impulse* (1903), gives a number of autobiographic reports of normal persons treating their first sexual feelings in childhood and the causes of the same. These reports naturally show the deficiency due to infantile amnesia; they do not cover the prehistoric time in the sexual life and therefore must be supplemented by psychoanalysis of individuals who became neurotic. Notwithstanding this, these reports are valuable in more than one respect, and information of a similar nature has urged me to modify my etiological assumption as mentioned in the text."

This assumption was one of Freud's early statements of infantile sexuality when he said that no seduction was necessary "to awaken the sexual life of the child" and "that such an awakening" could arise "spontaneously from inner sources." Ellis had already come to this conclusion in a paper, *The Alienist and Neurologist* (April 1898) where he coined the term autoerotism subsequently adopted by Freud. There followed some exchanges on the root causes of homosexuality, with Freud stressing "the acquired nature of the condition," and Ellis claiming that not enough attention was paid to innate disposition.

Havelock Ellis, Freud said, frequently found "a diminution of sexual impulse" in the inverted and even stated that some "slight anatomical stunting of the organs" could be detected. If this was so, it did not occur often enough "to be considered preponderate" and we had to recognise that "inversion and somatic hermaphroditism are totally independent of each other." Freud then confessed that psychoanalysis had not yet given a full explanation of inversion, but it was clear that he had thrown more light into its complexities than Ellis. He repeated that in every case examined by him he found that persons who later become inverts went through a childhood period "of very intense but short-lived fixation on a woman—usually on the mother."

THE exchanges between the two men entered a different phase with the appearance of Ellis' book, *The Philosophy of Conflict*, which contained a remarkable statement about Freud. Whether he overstrained the indebtedness Freud had already acknowledged, or whether ("unconsciously") the threat of the psychoanalytic school drove him to exaggerate, is not clear. Certainly he was now becoming aware of the danger that Freud might outstrip and overwhelm him. At all events, in *The Philosophy of Conflict* he said that the third volume of his *Studies* had encouraged Freud to persist in

> "the task he had already begun of pushing back the sexual origins of neuroses to an even earlier age, and especially to extend this early origin so as to cover not only neurotic but ordinary indi-

* All the Freud letters are under copyright, and we have unfortunately been unable, with one exception, to obtain permission to publish those messages to Ellis or even to quote directly from them. —*Ed.*



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viduals, an extension of pivotal importance, for it led to the Freudian doctrine becoming, instead of a mere clue to psycho-pathology, an alleged principle of universal psychological validity...."

This seemed to Freud gross exaggeration. It was one thing for Freud to "modify" his "etiological assumption... in the text" and quite another to see this as the beginning of "an alleged principle of universal psychological validity...." It was one thing to say that Ellis inspired Freud to follow a path of universal consequence and quite another to imply that without his inspiration, Freud's work might have remained "a mere clue to psychopathology."

But Ellis was in a critical mood. He went on to complain that the Freudians had perverted the term auto-eroticism derived—he did not go so far as to say stolen—from his vocabulary. When Freud first adopted the term in 1905 he "accepted its chief significance in the fairly legitimate sense of a sexual impulse which was not directed towards other persons but found its satisfaction in the individual's own person." Later, it was used "to indicate a sexual impulse which not only found its satisfaction within the individual's own person but was actually directed towards his own person...." This extension was, for Ellis, only to be described as *Narcissism* and had nothing to do with the original term. In his view, auto-eroticism derived from words like automobile, which meant "moving *by itself*," and not in the sense Freudians used it, *"towards itself."*

In turn, Freud complained that Ellis had himself misused the term

> [he] spoils, however, the sense of his invented term by comprising under the phenomena of auto-eroticism the whole of hysteria and masturbation in its full extent....

A tremendous solemnity marked the exploration of these subtleties. The dividing line between solemnity and conceit is sometimes narrow, and there were moments when a hint of ironic humility might have placed the whole dispute in a better perspective. Neither showed signs of such concessions.

More direct charges followed. Ellis revived the infantile-sexuality dispute and accused Freud of exposing his whole position "to quite unnecessary attacks." The diffused sexual visions of the child were, he repeated, of such a different kind, as to be quite distinguishable from those of the adult.

> "The leader's confused mistake has been followed by a sheep-like flock of Freudians, who have thereby copiously aided the unnecessary indignation of their opponents."

The incest-complex had long troubled Freud and Ellis, and the publication of Freud's *Totem and Taboo* brought this issue to the surface again. Both knew their Westermarck: "that an innate aversion against sexual intercourse exists between persons who live together from childhood, and that this feeling, since such persons are as a rule consanguineous, finds a natural expression in custom and law through the abhorrence of sexual intercourse between those closely related." Ellis largely supported Westermarck but disputed its instinctive character. "For persons who have grown up together from childhood, habit has dulled the sensual attraction of seeing, hearing, and touching," he wrote, "and has led it into a channel of quiet attachment, robbing it of its power to call forth the necessary erethistic excitement required to produce sexual tumescence."

This of course was nonsense, and Freud summoned Sir James Frazer to demolish Westermarck and Ellis at one blow. "... It is not easy to see," Frazer had written, "why any deep human instinct should need to be reinforced by law. There is no law commanding men to eat and drink, or forbidding them to put their hands in the fire. Men eat and drink and keep their hands out of the fire instinctively for fear of natural not legal penalties.... Instead of assuming, therefore, from the legal prohibition of incest that there is a natural aversion to incest, we ought rather to assume that there is a natural instinct in favour of it." This seemed unanswerable.

FROM a mosaic of sources—papers of William James, letters of Freud, talks with Ernest Jones, Ellis' own correspondence—I have pieced together the next stage of the differences between Freud and Ellis with difficulty, because access was denied (at least for a time) to some of the more important letters. For the most part, these exchanges combined scientific calm with vigorous exposition, and rarely fell into anything resembling bitterness. But there was never, in any sustained sense, a close personal relationship between the two men; their interchanges maintained that edge of classical detachment which pleased both, with very long intervals between one book or paper, riposte or argument.

A different note appeared in 1920. Early in that year Freud wrote what appears to have been a long letter to Ellis complaining about certain comments in *The Philosophy of Conflict*, and although destruction overtook the letter, it did not, to judge from Ellis's reply, preserve their usual amity. Ellis wrote (April 15th, 1920) saying what was already apparent, that the *Philosophy of Conflict* had not been written as a technical paper and had indulged a certain literary licence.

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If Ellis' mood was an approximation to penitence, there followed a review of McDougall's *Outline of Abnormal Psychology*, which was tantamount to an open attack on Freud. "... It has been the unfortunate fact that at an early period Freud became the head of a sect, on the model of those religious sects to which the Jewish mind has a ready tendency to lend itself, as the whole Christian world exists to bear evidence." A description of the troubles Freud encountered, Ellis wrote, had "lately been written by Dr. Stekel, with all his profuse and complacent candour, and it is a distressing narrative. Almost from the first all those adherents of Freud who, following the example of the master, displayed original vigour and personal initiative in development were, one by one, compelled to leave the sect, when they were not actually kicked out." Freud did not like this very much. Stekel, accepted by Ellis as a conventional analyst, he regarded as a wild cat; whatever he wrote was suspect.

Ellis' review in the periodical *Forum* resulted in a flurry of letters (McDougall, Freud, Francis Wharton, Hirschfeld, Wittels, and others), and a triangular correspondence developed between Freud, McDougall, and Ellis, each exchanging confidences about the other. In one of these letters, Ellis made a sustained attempt to show that Freud was really an artist, not a scientist, and repeated what he had already said in some other contexts, that no man could be a great scientist without qualities which were indispensable to the artist, profound imaginative insight being characteristic of both.

MANY years later Ernest Jones talked to Freud about this letter, and he recalled how amusingly plausible Freud had found it. According to Jones, Freud said in his reply to Ellis that he had toyed with the idea of writing a novel (or, more accurately, a story), and if story-tellers were artists then he supposed, to that extent, he might be one; but it was, of course, not really so. Many stories kept coming into his mind as a young man, and an Oriental one he had deliberately developed in some detail. However science would keep breaking in, and despite the ingenuity of Havelock Ellis' reversal of the facts he could not believe that his work had anything to do with art as such. He regarded imaginative writers as very valuable colleagues, and some were granted powers of penetration which dispensed, in certain special instances, with the laborious inquisitions undertaken by the psychologists, but there were times when he wished that they understood the principles of scientific verification better because he sometimes found very false statements delivered with the authority of an oracle.

Havelock Ellis continued to press home his analysis of Freud as "an artist" among his English friends. This was curious. Always regarding himself, with deep satisfaction, as an artist, Ellis seemed to find it necessary to see Freud in exactly similar terms. Why? Was it because he desired to identify himself with the man who showed signs of solving, one after another, the sexual problems which still baffled Ellis? At last he wrote to Freud again, and Freud replied.

His letter recalled that Ellis had last described him as an artist and when Freud replied that he was not, a long silence had ensued. Freud took it that Ellis' regard for psycho-analysis had suffered a set-back as a result of this correspondence, but now, after a considerable interval, he had written again—to Freud's pleasant surprise. The world was small, Freud said, and human relationships unexpected. It pleased him to know that Ellis knew his followers James and Alex Strachey. The letter concluded that signs of old age were now leaving an inescapable mark on him.

In the following year Freud wrote another letter to Ellis, dated September 12th, 1926.

Ellis had sent Freud a copy of a biography lately written about himself, a biography which strung together a series of facts on a thread of eulogy. With considerable charm and no sign of irony, Freud indicated in his letter that he could not quite visualise himself revealing so much of his private life to a biographer, but the book fulfilled a long felt need and he found himself turning the pages, consciously or unconsciously, looking for resemblances. One at least he found. Both men appreciated the picture of St. Hieronymous in his study and Freud had long possessed a reproduction which hung on the wall of his own work-room.

Reading the biography of Ellis, Freud overcame the irritation aroused by the *Forum* essay and drew the conclusion that it was sometimes valuable to cut across lines of conduct laid down by habit or even principle. But Ellis was, he said, a very different person from himself; his all-pervasive kindness did not belong to Freud. He found so many burdens, so many activities weighed heavily on him and it was a pleasure to read about a man who enjoyed what seemed to be such a full, various, and harmonious life. The letter drew to a close with several references to Freud's cancer of the jaw and said that with no likelihood of the cancer spreading, he would have to discover another exit from this world.

ELLIS had, for some time, talked of completing the supplement to the *Sex Studies*, and in the winter of 1926–27 he did at last pro-

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duce another volume which led to the final clash with the psychoanalytic school and Freud.

The limpid prose, the recondite learning were still very evident, but a new note ran through some chapters of the book, a note which bordered on querulousness. To put the matter plainly, the sweeping success of Freud had at last revealed limitations in his own work which, until then, had remained in doubt. In the seventh volume there were many niggles about Freud, and it quickly became clear that Freud's success had driven Ellis to query every possible statement from the Master. Consistent with Ellis' resistance to a monosexual view of the universe, the new volume restricted sexual motivation, but it would have received better reviews if the alternative case had been more convincingly argued.

In the chapter, "The Synthesis of Dreams," a picture emerged of a man clinging to outmoded convictions, advancing sometimes tortured, sometimes naïve justifications for views which technical advances had superseded. Was it that Ellis' mind had stiffened in the mould of his early thinking and he could no longer adjust himself to the swift revolutions of modern psychological thought? Or did he feel that to admit the validity of these philistine Freudians was to contribute to his own obsolescence?

The seventh volume provided Freudians with a key-word which some now used against Ellis—"failure." Ernest Jones stated that he could not be said to have made any real contribution to the science of sex. Worse still it was now evident, Jones said, that when Freud successfully achieved the aim which Ellis had set as his own, it was too much even for his noble nature, and he thereupon set himself a new aim: to prove that rival claims were unwarranted.

Ellis had much to his credit. Unlike Freud, he enjoyed another life in literature as critic, essayist, and stylist, and it set him high above the average English sex-psychologist and won him acclaim in Europe and America. As a sexologist, down the years he had pieced together an encyclopædia of sexual behaviour unmatched in the world, and if his attempts to organise the evidence were not nearly so successful as Freud's, he drew upon literary sources quite unknown to Freud. In England he had broken down the conspiracy of silence about sex, a tremendous feat under the formidable gaze of Her Imperial Majesty Queen Victoria, but his insight into motive was far less profound, and he could not match the imaginative brilliance which carried Freud beyond all commonplace frontiers. As a technical psychologist he was far behind Freud. As a scientist he applied the scientific method without Freud's powers of interpretation. As an old-world philosopher, remote from the austerities of logical positivism, there were times when his grasp of the human situation seemed less narrowly conditioned than Freud's, and a sense of universal wisdom distinguished much of his work. As a human being he outshone Freud, living a gracious life of saint-like tolerance in circumstances which might easily have broken any other man.

When the seventh volume appeared he was in a state of great emotional anguish. His wife had died many years before, old age was coming down on him, and another woman of great moment to him was involved with another man. His powers of detachment were strained; there were times when the philosopher aware of all-the-wisdom of all-the-ages appeared powerless in the grip of an engulfing love and agonised jealousy. After publication he was depressed by the poor reception of the book and the few serious notices it received.

FREUD and Ellis remained in touch with one another, and correspondence broke out afresh early in the summer of 1928.

Freud wrote a melancholy letter. He had received Ellis' latest book and added it to his collection, he said, but what was the point of continuing to build a library at his age? He went on working, simply because patients could not be neglected, but the freshly accumulating data had ceased to respond to the old spontaneous constructions. He said that if he were alive he would not overlook Ellis' next birthday.

In March 1930 Freud sent Ellis a copy of *Civilisation and Its Discontents*—a book which he did not settle down to study for some time. In May of that year another letter came from Freud [in the Ernest Jones' collection]:

*My dear Friend,*

I thought you would be interested to read the following description of the relations between the psychiatrist and the writer:

"A writer should, so it is said, avoid any contact with psychiatry and should leave to doctors the portrayal of morbid mental states. In reality no true writer has ever heeded this precept. The portrayal of the psychic life of human beings is, of course, his special domain: he has always been the forerunner of science, and thus of scientific psychology too. For the borderline between normal and what are called morbid mental states is, to some extent, a purely conventional one; furthermore, it is so fluid that probably every one of us oversteps it many times in the course of a day. On the other hand, psychiatry would be making a mistake were it to try to confine itself permanently to the study of those severe and melancholy afflictions that result from coarse disturbances of the delicate psychic apparatus.... Therefore the writer can no more shun the psychiatrist that the psychiatrist the writer, and

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the poetic treatment of a psychiatric theme may be perfectly correct without any loss in beauty." I trust you are still in reasonable health.

Ellis replied to this letter saying, in effect, that he could not agree more. A gap of four years followed and then, unexpectedly, in 1934 Ellis returned to the attack in *My Confessional*. It was unfortunate that Freud and "some other psychoanalysts" sometimes showed "a malicious pleasure in trying to give an evil aspect to human impulses" and "regarded hate as a primary motive and love as a secondary derivative." This was not easy to understand from the evolutionary point of view, Ellis said, since "the reverse order would be far more plausible . . . the human animal, so defenceless in early life, with an infancy of such unparalleled length (or only paralleled by the elephant) could not survive unless bathed in a perpetual atmosphere of love."

When at last Ellis began to read *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, his qualifications about the book were immense. It was a book which saw man's attempts to realise happiness continually frustrated by three major forces, the hostility of nature, the ageing and decay of the human body, and the appalling complexities of human relationships. It was a book which analysed the substitute gratifications so many people pursued in the hope of deceiving reality, some turning to alcohol, some retreating into mysticism which bought peace at the price of blunted instincts, some into the world of art, and some accepting the mass delusion of religion. Even love itself, wrought upon, clotted up, brought to an artificial pitch of consistency, was likely to become yet another surrogate. How (Freud asked) did all this come about? Why was it so tragically necessary that a large part of the human race could only face life armed with one or other of these magnificent self-deceptions? His answer was coldly realistic. The why and the wherefore of human existence was beyond our comprehension, but those boundaries we had so painfully uncovered, pushing back the romantic clouds amassed by our ancestors, told us that life was a harsh struggle and in the long view a tragic struggle, unrelieved by anything resembling divine compassion. Man stood on the summit of a colossal achievement. Man was supreme in all forms of life. But the spectacle revealed by his long climb out of the slime was overpowering in its icy majesty, and the chill of *knowing*, of facing the long chain of pitiless peaks, was only exhilarating if it brought forth a certain brand of courage.

Inevitably the five surrogates were not, for Ellis, completely valid. Drink, he agreed, was a deplorable and petty form of escape, but the ageing of the human body need not be tragic, and the Indian summer of life was physically so much more serene and undemanding, as his own physical self now bore witness. As for "mysticism," he smiled whenever he read Freudian references to it. They didn't understand; they didn't realise how artificial were the boundaries they imposed on themselves; how different from Yoga or the teachings of Laotze was his own ability to yield to "the oceanic feeling" which the analysts so accurately described and grossly misinterpreted. They should give more attention to Russell's book *Mysticism and Logic* and to the indefinable mysteries of the *essence* of personality.

So it was with love. Where Freud stripped away what, in one sense, was a mask, to reveal the contorted features of hate, Ellis believed it possible to penetrate beyond *temporary* hate to another level of love, differing only from the first by achieving greater depth. But human relationships? There Ellis largely accepted Freud's strictures for he knew only too well what appalling anguish could disrupt the most serene and apparently permanent ties.

In 1938 the Nazis marched into Vienna to find a frail old man of eighty-two, the inside of his right jaw eaten away by cancer, a man who had survived fifteen operations in fifteen years, sitting at his desk in the house which had been his home for forty-seven years. The Gestapo called. His books were burnt, his money confiscated, but Sigmund Freud was too old and frail to concern them much further. Under persuasion from Ernest Jones, Freud boarded the Orient Express on June 4th, 1938, and two days later a fragile death's-head figure, dressed almost gaily in a green hat and green top-coat, walked with the aid of a cane into a house at Hampstead. One of the first things he did was to write to Havelock Ellis. He wished, he said, very much to see him. Ellis replied on July 14th, regretting that it was very difficult for a permanent invalid to arrange a meeting. Later, mutual friends explained the situation more exactly to Freud.

They never did meet. The two figures who had so deeply contributed to the moral revolution which each desired to bring about, were now within a few miles of one another but facing death. Freud, with the cold courage of the complete scientist, refusing any alleviation to the pain of cancer beyond the pitiful relief of an occasional aspirin; Ellis dominating a throat disease which was slowly killing him, with a detachment which did not break down for ten years. It was said that Freud's handsome face and cool eyes seldom revealed the agony he underwent. So it was with Ellis. Both men died with a rationalist's disdain of death.

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# NOTES & TOPICS

## Thomas Mann and the "Domestic Perversity"

FOR once an author welcomes the usually so tiresome temptation to comment on a review of his book, and I am grateful to the editors of ENCOUNTER for asking me to do so. I should like to think that I am accepting the invitation entirely for Thomas Mann's sake. As far as my my own authorship is concerned, I can only express my sincere appreciation of Mr. Goronwy Rees's courtesy and generosity, and of the restraint he exercised in not allowing his judgment of my book to be affected too much by the formidable doubts he entertains about the moral and literary status of Thomas Mann.

I am, alas, familiar with the truly awful problem raised by Mr. Rees. No, I don't think it is improper to ask his questions. I ask them myself; and I could not help asking them in *The Ironic German* because they are the tragic inspiration of Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*. Mr. Rees writes:

> What Mann achieved was not victory itself, but the semblance and appearance of victory, and he was able to do this only by dissembling and evading the real nature of the little "domestic perversity...."

I wish he had not said this—not because it denies victory to Thomas Mann: he himself knew only too well that he lived in an age which rendered literary triumphs utterly questionable. This was the reason why he let *Doctor Faustus* be written by an imaginary writer who, on his own confession, could only be defeated by the task imposed upon him. The ironic device of the fictitious narrator, I said, never had weightier implications. For by making Serenus Zeitblom, the humanist and pedagogue, tell the demonic tale—in a style formed by its customary devotion to the liberal arts and now hopelessly overstrained by its alien purpose—Thomas Mann declared that the theme was out of all proportion to the traditional means of literature. Serenus Zeitblom, I wrote, is the novelist's offer of abdication, the *nom de plume* of silence. Clearly, there is no offence in Mr. Rees's denying victories which are not claimed.

But that "little" in Mr. Rees's sentence! Irony with a vengeance! Does he seriously wish to suggest that the German catastrophe meant little to Thomas Mann? That his answer to Buchenwald was a smile? If it makes sense at all to expect a literary answer where such a full stop was put to all literary questions, then it is true to say that Thomas Mann's response was "ironical." But the irony was not of the kind suspected by Mr. Rees. It was both more simple and more terrible: namely, the irony of being a writer in an indescribable world. This is the meaning of *Doctor Faustus*, of the artist's pact with the Devil. It is with his help alone that Leverkühn, the artist of the story, dares to defy the eclipse of art. Without this perverse inspiration he would remain paralysed by his own sense of truth which persuades him that the artistic manipulation of illusion has become irrelevant, or even frivolous, in the face of suffering. For having been deserted by the suffering God and His promise of redemption, agony no longer permits the lie of meaning with which the play of art molests and mocks it; only its "undisguised and untransfigured expression," Leverkühn protests, may still be permissible. And so he sets out to "revoke and un-write" the Ninth Symphony.

Of course, there is irony in his "un-writing" it with a musical creation: *The Lamentation of Doctor Faustus*, composed, as it were, in defiance of its own text which culminates in the Devil's injunction: "Be silent, suffer, and abstain, of thy ill lot to none complayne!" And yet this paradox of silent agony issuing in music moves its first listener to ask whether it might not have its correspondence in a religious paradox—

> that out of irremediable desperation might rise a vestige of hope. It would be the hope beyond hopelessness, the transcendence of despair—not its betrayal, but the miracle that passes belief.

This is how Thomas Mann smiles at Buchenwald; and this is also why I think Mr. Rees is wrong in implying that I have recommended the *gaya scienza* of *Joseph* as "the artist's answer to all the other bloodthirsty sciences which so successfully rule the world." Certainly not; for there can be no "artist's answer." More than once I said, and often implied, that the bloodthirsty sciences have established a "truth" which, by its very nature, is unanswerable by art. For there are worlds which, in the cruel literal sense, do not bear contemplating. To behold them with that fineness of sensibility, which is the condition of art, would blind the eye of the beholder and for ever cripple the æsthetic faculty. "In the end," wrote Thomas Mann in *Doctor Faustus*, "art throws off the appearance of art," and I added that it "may be forced to



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abdicate altogether when life itself assumes so fantastic a shape that the imagination can no longer compete."

What then were the ethics of that "irony" into which Thomas Mann withdrew from, as Mr. Rees puts it, "the human condition as it revealed itself in his own time," in order to create in *Joseph the Provider* his utopia of the good government of human affairs? They were the ethics of survival itself. Should one really speak of "dissembling and evading" when an artist falls back upon the resources of a friendlier imagination in order to rescue the love of life from a life that seems nothing but the occasion for despair? This is why I said that *Joseph and his Brothers* was "the work of an emigrant, of a mind whom his age and country left with the alternative of either despairing or finding the profounder reasons of love." Yet I might still not have felt justified in saying this, had Thomas Mann not also made the attempt, both grand and hopeless, to write the story of a genius incomparably greater than himself—the story of Leverkühn who despised the grace of the imaginative retreat, and stayed, and saw, and succumbed. Thomas Mann himself, it is true, was not possessed of so extreme a genius as Leverkühn's. He was a novelist, born to continue the tradition into which he entered with *Buddenbrooks*. There seems little point in blaming him for not having been a Swift. One might just as well hold it against him that he was no Dimitroff, or Ossietzky, or Theodor Haecker —or indeed Karl Kraus, the only satirist in the German language comparable in stature to Swift. And even he knew that no satire could be produced about Hitler's Germany. *"Mir fällt zu Hitler nichts ein,"* he said, and what he meant was the defeat of language by a reality which exceeded the scope of moral indignation and satirical exaggeration.

One may well ask whether in such a situation there was still room to accommodate a great novelist. It is a question with which Thomas Mann was much concerned—and therefore also my book about him. I need not repeat how he answered the question with *Doctor Faustus*. And at the end of his days, in his essay on Chekhov, he made Chekhov's final anxiety his own: has his life as an artist not been meaningless? Has he not worked merely for the amusement of a doomed world "without offering it so much as the glimpse of a saving truth"? A man who at eighty asks such questions cannot possibly deserve the simple answer "How right you are," even if he were not the author of *Buddenbrooks*, *The Magic Mountain*, *Joseph*, and *Doctor Faustus*.

Mr. Goronwy Rees may have created the impression—no doubt, without intending it—that Thomas Mann, while the world was set on fire by his country, did nothing but write *Joseph and his Brothers*. The reader ought therefore to be reminded of the many pamphlets and speeches—they fill two volumes—in which Thomas Mann sought first to rouse resistance to Hitler inside Germany, then to awaken the world to the immensity of the German danger, and finally to undermine, through broadcasts from London, the moral defences of Hitler's "Fortress Europe." Also, it may be fitting to quote in conclusion a few sentences from the open letter he wrote on New Year's Day 1937 to the Dean of Bonn University, in reply to a

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communication which deprived him of his honorary doctorate:

> When I embarked upon my career as a writer, I felt happily attuned to the intellectual temper of my people, and securely at home in its spiritual traditions. I was born, I thought, to represent my nation rather than be its martyr. My natural disposition seemed to suggest that it should be my lot to give the world some kind of higher pleasure rather than add to its hatreds. Much wrong must have been done before my life could take so wrong, so unnatural, a course. Yes, I know, I have angered those who are now in power long before they actually were.... But when Germany really fell into their hands, I intended to remain silent for the sake of maintaining contact with my German readers.... Yet it proved impossible for me to abide by my decision. I should not have been able to live and work, I should have suffocated, if I had not, as the ancients said, "washed my heart" from time to time, and freely expressed my horror and disgust at the vile things that were said at home, and the still more abominable deeds that were done.... What, and now they say I have insulted Germany by abominating them who happen to rule it?! They have the unbelievable audacity to identify themselves with Germany?! Ah, but there will come a time when the German people will give anything not to be identified with them!...

And he ended: "God help our country, so misused now and cast into darkness! May He teach it how to make its peace with the world and with itself!" These words, or almost the same, he wrote again ten years later. They conclude Serenus Zeitblom's account of the life and death of Leverkühn in *Doctor Faustus*. It seems unlikely that "little" is the *mot juste* for describing what he felt about the domestic perversity.

May I also be allowed a marginal note on a subject which, oddly enough, is not touched by Mr. Rees although it is strongly suggested by the very questions he asks? In discussing Thomas Mann's early conservative beliefs, I spoke of the contempt he then felt for the liberal liberators and progressive ideologues, and quoted from *Meditations of a Non-Political Man*:

> The negativity of their idea of freedom is essentially nihilistic, and wholesome only in the smallest doses, as a homeopathic poison; and is it really indicated at a time when the innermost desire of the world, the whole world, is not for still more anarchy through liberty, but for a new binding faith, and when the belief in belief has already reached the point of a psychological readiness to accept a new obscurantism?

And I commented:

> This, of course, anticipates not only the terrible failure of German liberalism in effectively opposing Hitler's "new binding faith," but explicitly something else: the proletarian tyranny which "after this war will be boundless and shattering; all rebellious zeal and satirical anger will be needed to oppose it." He certainly needed the zeal and the anger in the case of Hitler; but it was one of the minor historical misdeeds of Hitler's that he also exhausted them. Later German tyrants, however shattering, were spared the satire.

Had my critic found that I was too "moderate" in *this* comment, I might have pleaded guilty. For while Thomas Mann's dealings with Hitler's Germany were, on one level at least, utterly unproblematical, the alarming puzzle was his occasional hobnobbing afterwards with the Germany of Herr Ulbricht, his conciliatory waving and bowing to the Press cameras of the "People's Democracy," and his benevolent shaking of hands with its literary lackeys. The magnetic field of Thomas Mann's irony has an enormous width. Once again it has proved its power. For is it not ironical that in a world of liberal letters, applauding with "non-political" abandon and almost masochistic delight the politically corrupted genius of Bertolt Brecht, frowning doubts should be voiced in 1958 concerning the depth of Thomas Mann's humanistic indignation at the tyrannical infamies of—Hitler?

*Erich Heller*

# Dissent from Bonn

THERE is so much in Richard Lowenthal's *Letter from Berlin* [ENCOUNTER, February] with which I agree that I hesitate to find fault with one or two features of his analysis—the more so as I have no smooth, neatly-fitting, internally consistent thesis to elaborate (as he has). I only want to add a few accents here and there, to enter a few reservations, and to insert a question mark or two where, it seems to me, his exclamation marks are rather too emphatic.

In the first place, we are agreed that the Soviet thrust over Berlin does not mean that Moscow has simply reverted to Stalin's strategy, even if it has borrowed something of his methods. Quite obviously, the goal in Europe is now, as before, a sort of co-existence, and it is therefore concerned, in Berlin as elsewhere, to consolidate the *status quo* (in its own way and on its own terms), and the threats uttered in November and December had one primary purpose—to force the West, its public opinion disturbed by fear of war, to

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accept its terms. The Soviets may rattle their atom bombs, but they have no intention of risking a real conflict.

Lowenthal did not explain *why* they thought it necessary to make this tactical raid on Stalin's arsenal, but the reason does not seem far to seek. The "new course" of inducements and relaxations initiated by the old tyrant's successors in 1953 yielded some indisputable successes, but not nearly enough; on the other hand, it was shown, two years ago, to be an extremely risky undertaking. It is true that as a result of this more flexible policy the West's "cold war" weapons were blunted. But the year 1956, which opened with the Twentieth Party Congress and closed with the Polish "October revolution" and the Hungarian rising, suggested a lesson; Moscow's European empire was being more rapidly and radically "softened up" than was the free world. A means designed to further the disintegration of the Western bloc worked, surely to Krushchev's great disgust, even more effectively as an explosive within the Eastern bloc.

Since then the master of the Kremlin has tried both to consolidate his own European sphere and to maintain a constant diplomatic-propagandist drumfire against the enemy in order to make him "ripe for negotiations." By and large, the first objective has been attained. The Kremlin's political behaviour is far more differentiated than it ever was under the pathologically "monolithic" Stalin; the more refractory of the satellite states have been granted a minimum freedom of domestic action, and this has made it possible to hold the external reins more tightly. If in this post-October period, the hardening of Soviet policy has not made it easier to gain substantial concessions from the West, in keeping with its second objective, still, Soviet self-confidence has received a tremendous boost from its recent successes in technology, and the unending proposals for negotiations have come more and more to be spiced with threats. The most favourable opening for such a manœuvre was obviously the spot where the Western position was geographically at its weakest—Berlin.

It is at this point that Lowenthal's analysis seems to me slightly too single-track, too "logical," to reflect the problem in its entire and confusing complexity. Of course he is right in saying that the Soviets are not merely concerned to eliminate the "cloak-and-dagger outfits" in West Berlin, or to seal off the escape-route for that part of the population that is voting against the Ulbricht terror "with its feet." (It was disturbing to see that neither the Western powers nor the Bonn government made the slightest attempt to puncture this Soviet propaganda argument. It was left to Mayor Willy Brandt, speaking in Berlin, to be the first responsible Western politician to refer to the indisputable activities of those communist-controlled "outfits" which, operating from East Berlin, carry on their work in the West on a vast scale. An answer on these lines would have been better, and above all more genuine, than the ambiguities of the Bonn note, or the embarrassed silence of the Western chancelleries.)

What is important about Berlin, of course, is that it worries the East on a much more fundamental, more "existential" level; it is the symbol of a libertarian policy which makes real impact on the East. According to Lowenthal, Western presence on the Spree would emerge in the general context of a policy which accepts the *status quo* of European partition as a "meaningless anomaly." But in reality the question is not so unambiguous, not so neatly resolved. No policy is ever cut all of a piece from a single cloth.

Lowenthal himself remarks that the West has in fact never done anything to upset the *status quo*, neither on 17th June, 1953, nor in October–November 1956. Whenever the situation was critical it observed the rule of "spheres of interest" with scrupulous care, as though it were embodied in a binding agreement. For almost ten years this *"als ob"* has dominated European politics, and has marked the limits of the East–West conflict. No agreement was ever made on the subject, at any rate no more than an implicit one; and still this agreement, which has no formal existence, has been observed more strictly and more carefully, by both sides, than many a treaty solemnly and publicly concluded and sealed. But—and this seems to me the heart of the matter—Berlin's special position has a double implication. Because of the effects which necessarily follow from its existence as an "outpost of freedom" within a totalitarian environment, it appears to the Russians to threaten the *status quo*, and at the same time it is itself a part (and a beneficiary) of that *status quo*. Only under its protection has Berlin been able to rise from the ruins of the war and the hardships of the blockade, and only in that context has it been able to serve as the Western "shop window." On this service Lowenthal rightly places a high value, perhaps a little too high; Berlin is hardly a danger to Soviet rule in Eastern Europe as a whole, although it is a danger to the East-German border province of the Soviet empire, whose governor must still set certain limits on terror and coercion so long as the "Berlin gap" is not closed. The peculiar post-war Berlin arrangement drew one part of the city into the Western sphere of in-

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fluence and the other into the Eastern, but at the same time it thwarted any rigid consolidation of these spheres; which explains why Khrushchev has to strike at the existing state of affairs and call it in question if he wants to establish his own ideal *status quo*.

Thus, the Kremlin which proceeded to break the unspoken agreement of the last ten years by seeking to encroach on the rights of the Western powers in Berlin. Seen in this light, the mere defence of the *status quo* acquires far greater significance than Lowenthal appears ready to ascribe to it. Defence on these lines does not by any means exclude replies, reconsiderations, and counter-moves—indeed, it makes them necessary. The question is whether Lowenthal's general prescription for such an offensive ("disengagement," "parallel withdrawals by both blocs"), is *at this moment* a promising means of mounting such a counter-proposal.

I do not want to re-open up the whole rather familiar debate (Kennan, Healey, etc.) on this general question. However, one aspect of it, in my opinion, has been given far too little attention, and that is the psychological aspect. "Parallel withdrawals" *might* acquire the significance of an offensive of Western vigour and initiative, if the idea were interpreted and operated in that sense by the responsible politicians. But, in Germany at least, it *is* so interpreted only by a very few. The readiness for "withdrawal" pure and simple, for the surrender of positions *without* any equivalent concession, the readiness to rely on miraculous effects which a "relaxation of tension" is expected to produce —all this has made rapid advances in the last few years in those blind circles hostile to present policy. They have become increasingly ready, for the sake of "relaxation" (*Entspannung*), to discard one after another the beliefs formerly held, in the vague hope that this may perhaps lead to that National Re-unification which has not been achieved by the "policy of strength," by non-recognition of Eastern Germany, by the demand for free elections, etc. On all sides, here in Bonn's Germany, there is a growing inclination to accept at least the essential parts of Khrushchev's programme for a "status quo à la russe," in the (illusory) hope that "an improvement in the international atmosphere" effected by this means will, perhaps, after all, persuade the communists to agree where the policy of "Western alliances" and "strength" has failed. So they are getting ready "to negotiate with Pankow"; and Germany's *Bündnislosigkeit*, which at one time was regarded as the *price* for "unity in freedom," is now offered up as a move towards "relaxation" (without re-unification). Little by little they are slipping down the road of capitulation without even noticing it. In this kind of political atmosphere (countered in Bonn only by the jittery fear of any change at all), is it possible to think of "disengagement" with the confidence and firmness outlined by Lowenthal?

The debates in Bonn on the Draft Treaty which Khrushchev added to his Berlin ultimatum are characteristic of this new mounting confusion. The draft clearly presented Soviet views on the solution to the German question. The reaction? The Government revealed an extreme disinclination to make any counter-proposals whatsoever; the obvious fear was that the entire political-military structure which it has with so much effort established might begin to shake. Instead of disposing of this fear, the Opposition is doing everything to confirm it. The pre-occupation with "negotiations" is almost hysterical. If only new offers were to come, if only new concessions could be made. What is left of Kurt Schumacher's unrelenting fight against a policy of Eastern appeasement? And appeasement it is, a "left" version which corresponds to the well-known "right" version; namely, the tranquil dream of the good bourgeois, sheltered behind an atomic wall, doing business as usual. "Relaxation" is rapidly becoming the new tranquilliser; it certainly costs less than NATO.

I know that Richard Lowenthal has not the slightest part in this shrill clamour for "negotiations." But does such a climate of appeasement in fact provide the opportunity for what seems to Lowenthal a serious and promising Western initiative? I doubt it. It seems to me rather that a new European climate of opinion is being formed; it would appear to be precisely the one that (in Lowenthal's view) Khrushchev is aiming at—a climate in which no other choice can be made between acceptance (at least half-way) of the Russian terms for "co-existence" and atomic war. The entire tactical effort of the Kremlin to-day is calculating on the inability of innocent peace-loving spirits to utter a simple, straightforward, and decisive "no." Without this readiness to reply with an unqualified "no" (when necessary), negotiations for a comprehensive settlement, necessarily hazardous in any case, are from the outset severely handicapped.

To be sure, the situation may be different elsewhere; certainly in America, possibly in England. There are elsewhere more reliable, more solid bodies of public opinion. This much too should be said: the signs of "erosion" in the Federal German Republic are *in part* the result of an unimaginative diplomacy which has been content to repeat old and threadbare formulas (in which, at bottom, it did not really believe), and which would fall into a neurotic

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faint whenever somebody (even Mr. Dulles) displayed any sign of tactical flexibility.

Let me repeat: I know that I don't have to tell Richard Lowenthal this. But only a few of those who make use of his words do so in his spirit. The West's foreign policy may face the same danger that confronted Khrushchev in 1956—political methods designed to soften up the opponent's position may, in the end, put one's own position in jeopardy.

*F. R. Allemann*

# Leon Trotsky as Diarist

WHILE Trotsky lived on Prinkipo, it seemed to him that if he could but get to some western land, he might resume the shaping of history and man's destiny. But when Daladier granted him refuge in France (in 1935), the two years he spent there were the loneliest and saddest of his life.

At first there were at least secretaries and close disciples around him. But he had to keep out of French politics, avoid the public eye, live incognito, stay away from the big cities. The Government trembled lest there be a physical attack upon him—from the Communists who asserted that he had been invited to advise Daladier on war with Russia, from the Right for whom a Communist was a Communist and "World Revolution" worse than "Socialism in one country," from aggrieved White Russians, from the Soviet police. How then was he to sink into the landscape, yet continue the activities which were the sum and substance of his life?

He settled in an isolated villa over the Mediterranean, where the local officials were unaware of the identity of the stranger. Then Rudolf Klement, Trotsky's courier from Paris, arrived at night on a motor cycle with the lights out, bringing police, a scandal, and the need to move.

He had to dispense with secretaries and couriers, shave his beard, part his hair differently, don French "bourgeois" clothes, put on deep mourning to minimise casual conversation. Trotsky without a secretary was as unwonted a sight since 1917 as Trotsky without his beard. Accompanied only by his loyal wife, Natalia Ivanovna, he sought seclusion in a tiny mountain village in the south-eastern Alps. This was more isolated than Prinkipo, forcing him to talk to himself in diary form in order to record his analyses of what he read in the press, and leave for posterity his Marxist forecasts of its future.

The result—Harvard has just published it as *Trotsky's Diary in Exile*—is a poor and melancholy thing, melancholy in both senses of the word. Yet it is a psychological document of the highest importance, isolating as if in a laboratory the spirit of infallibility and dictatorship as it lives in one who has lost the power to dictate but not the will, nor the faith in his own infallibility.

His first word is a protest that a diary "is a literary form I am not especially fond of." We may believe, as he asserts, that he would "prefer a daily newspaper." Yet, unlike Lenin, Trotsky was one who glanced frequently at his own image in the mirror of history. He had already written an *Autobiography*, two brief wartime diaries, one of a stay in Switzerland, another in Spain, a marvellous account of being transported to Siberia and escaping ("My Round Trip"), and innumerable passages of an autobiographical character in *The Stalin School of Falsification*, his *History*, his *Lenin*, and other political-polemical works.

Yet it is clear that he is writing this diary *faute de mieux*. It consists of sporadic entries in three notebooks, written with little of his usual care for form and literary skill: 12 entries for February 1935; 13 for March; 11 for April; 14 for May; 8 for June; 4 for July; 1 for September. The July and September entries were written in Norway after France had refused to renew his permit, and Norway's Labour Government had granted him asylum. All the entries smack of boredom and disgust, disgust not so much with Stalin as with the Western socialist and democratic world. The entries are often only newspaper clippings, with his interpretation of them; lists of books read, with banal social-critical remarks; oracular utterances on Marxism; touching pen portraits of his faithful wife and her sufferings at the persecution of their family; "prophetic" forecasts of the future of France and Europe; a few reminiscences, one of them (as we shall see) important, on Lenin and the days of their joint tenancy of power.

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To this varied and unequal assortment, the Harvard Editors have chosen to add a *Testament*, written five years later in Mexico, when Trotsky was suffering from high blood pressure and expected his life to end soon by a hæmorrhage of the brain. (The hæmorrhage came five months after the *Testament*, brought on by the alpine pick of an agent of the G.P.U.).

IN MORE SENSES THAN ONE, the year 1935 was a turning-point for Leon Trotsky. He was alone for the first time in years in a Western land which he might have begun to study at close range, reconsidering at the same time some of his certitudes. For all he really saw or understood of the world around him, he might as well have remained on Prinkipo or in Alma Ata. Hitler had just taken over power and crushed the mightiest Communist movement outside Russia. Trotsky sensed that this opened a new phase in history, but he totally misread it. France would go fascist "within the year." "Mosley, or someone like him," would make England fascist "the minute France went." After that "the Scandinavian countries would be unable to hold out." All this is noted with *Schadenfreude*: Engels "after forty years" was proving right about England; "parliamentary democracy is doomed"; the old order "will collapse with a stench.... The only question is, who will be its heir?"

He must speed up his own answer to this question. If he had already accepted Stalin's theory that the socialists were "the accomplices" of fascism, he was now prepared to add that the Stalinists were, too. He would give up his dreams of reconquering the Third International, and lay the foundations for a Fourth. This alone could save mankind. Whether the masses accepted his International and his formulæ before it was "too late," or whether "universal barbarism" would ensue, in either case "the correctness of the Marxist prognosis is *bound* to reveal itself." It was the fact that history might choose either one of these two correct Marxist prognoses which made his work now "more important than in 1917." Without his help, Lenin would probably have succeeded in making the October Revolution and winning the Civil War. "But now my work is 'indispensable' in the full sense of the word." The collapse of the Second and Third Internationals leaves "no one except me to carry out the mission of arming a new generation.... I need at least five years more of uninterrupted work to ensure a succession." (He was to have five years and five months more before the alpine pick crashed into his skull.)

THE YEAR 1935 WAS ALSO the year in which Stalin began to arrest first hundreds, then thousands of Russian Communists for having "plotted with Trotsky and foreign intelligence agents the murder of Kirov." The saddest pages of the diary deal with the fate of those connected by ties of blood or allegiance to Trotsky, whom Stalin now persecuted as a means of atomising the party, disposing of potential successors, and taking vengeance on the opponent temporarily beyond his reach.

First had come the turn of Trotsky's one-time collaborators: "Glazman driven to suicide, Butov shot in a G.P.U. prison, Blumkin shot, Sermuks and Poznansky banished [they were later shot]."

Then his oldest daughter, Zinaida, broken in health, her husband in prison, had committed suicide in Berlin when Stalin revoked her citizenship along with that of all of Trotsky's family in exile. Now the diary records the exiling to Siberia of his first wife, Alexandra Lvovna, at the age of sixty, thirty-three years after she had ceased to be Trotsky's wife. His elder son, Lyova, is in danger from the brownshirts in Berlin. (Natalia Ivanovna succeeded in getting a visa for him to come to Paris, by a personal appeal to Herriot; in Paris he died in a hospital under suspicious circumstances in 1937.) The younger son, Sergei, an engineer who has never been interested in politics, is the subject of anxious speculations. A number of entries deal with Natalia's efforts to learn of his fate. When the diary ends he is in Siberia, where a little over a year later he would be shot by the G.P.U. His only political act had been an attempt to exercise the right of silence in a régime that denies even that to the son of a man who must be denounced.

These are the most moving pages of the diary. But even as we grieve with the old man and his devoted helpmeet at the sufferings of their flesh and blood, our sympathy is suddenly chilled by reminiscences on the death of the Tsar and all his household. Trotsky remembers with pride that it was he who first proposed that Tsar Nicholas should be "tried for his crimes and executed." But Lenin, being "wiser," said "there might not be enough time for a trial." For the first time it is put clearly on record that Lenin and Sverdlov then ordered the execution of the Tsar and all his family. The Government —of "Lenin and Trotsky"—took the lives of the Tsar and his wife, his brother and the latter's wife, his four daughters and sickly son, an accompanying nun, the faithful servitors who had gone into exile with the Tsar, and several of his Ministers.

> The decision [the Diary records] was not only expedient but necessary. The execution of the Tsar's family was needed not only to frighten, horrify, and dishearten the enemy, but also to

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shake up our own ranks, to show them that there was no turning back, that ahead lay either complete victory or complete ruin.... The severity of this summary justice... showed the world that we would continue to fight on mercilessly, stopping at nothing.

*Stopping at nothing*—is not this but a paraphrase of the nihilist slogan, *"Everything is permitted"*? But where, one pauses to wonder, is the idealism of the dedicated terrorists of 1905? —Kalyaev, telling his comrades, "I could not throw the bomb when I saw the Grand Duke's children riding with him in the carriage"—Voinarsky saying to approving co-conspirators, "If Dubassov is accompanied by his wife, I will not throw the bomb"—Savinkov holding back his bomb when he saw that 'innocent strangers' might be killed on Admiral Dubassov's train—the same Savinkov escaping from prison revolver in hand, resolved to shoot any officer that bars his path, but to turn it on himself rather than shoot an ordinary soldier? How many words of Trotsky's "explanation" would Stalin have to change in applying them to the extermination of Leon Trotsky, all his family, and his "faithful servitors"?

THOUGH TRAGEDY PERSONAL AND POLITICAL are in the pages of the diary, not a line of it suggests that Trotsky has re-thought anything, learned anything from his own fall and exile by a régime to which everything is permitted and which "stops at nothing." Nowhere is there any new-found wisdom, any trace of humility or even a momentary doubt. Every line scornful, omniscient, cocksure, full of self-importance and certitude—and all the dogmatic pronouncements and judgments so wide of the mark!

Blum is a "has-been," his whole concern being to prevent the working class from struggling against fascism. Blum and Cachin in their "united" opposition to Trotskyism are ineptly compared to Kerensky and Tseretelli opposing Lenin in 1917. Engels' relation to Marx is absurdly and humourlessly compared to Christ's relation to Jehovah. Trotsky feels a closer kinship with Roehm than he does with Leon Blum. Macdonald is "more contemptible than Mussolini"; the Webbs are closer to Stanley Baldwin, and Baldwin "closer to the Celtic Druids as intellectual types" than to Lenin and the author of the Diary. Spaak is "a shoddy little man... an honest 'friend of the people'... no more than that." (One is reminded of Trotsky's last word on Stalin: "a plebeian democrat of the provincial type... such in essence he remained to the end.") Trotsky believed such epithets were the most devastating at his command, for he hated "plebeian democracy" more than the Barbarism with which he believed he would contend when "parliamentary democracy collapsed now with a stench."

THERE IS YET another sad note, subdued but persistent, running through the pages of the Diary. The Diarist feels that his powers are beginning to decline. "Old age is the most unexpected of the things that happen to a man." "The worst vice is to be more than fifty-five years old" (before the Diary opened, Trotsky turned 55). "Contemporary history is running in high gear.... The only pity is that the organism-destroying microbes work even faster."

Deep down within him Trotsky senses that he will not return in triumph to Russia in five years, or ever, nor preside over the re-making of the world and of man in the image of his blueprint. Indeed, five years later there is his *Testament*, bearing witness once more that neither the years of unending purge, nor the Stalin-Hitler Pact, nor the Second World War, has brought a shadow of a doubt. The *Testament* stipulates no errors, revises no positions, only reaffirms "my Marxist, dialectical materialist, irreconcilable atheist... faith in the Communist future."

"Life is beautiful," it assures those whom he expects to gather to hear the reading of the will. To "future generations" he leaves the task so ill begun "to cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence, and enjoy it to the full...."

*Bertram D. Wolfe*

# Russian Painting in London

THIS year's Winter Exhibition at the Royal Academy is a sad disappointment. Its aim is praiseworthy—to present the West for the first time with a more or less complete picture of the development of painting in Russia from the 13th century to the 20th. But the picture that has emerged is a dull one, and it is only too easy to sympathise with those critics who have been eagerly contrasting what the Russians have produced in the fields of music and letters with their lack of aptitude for the plastic arts. In fact, the failure of the exhibition is due not so much to the force of circumstances as to a bad choice of exhibits. The selection is at once tendentious and incompetent: not only is it dictated by the official ideology current in the Soviet Union, but even within this frame of reference reveals a curious deficiency in qualitative judgment.

Certainly, Russian painting, while richer than that of the other Slav or the Scandinavian countries put together, could never produce an

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exhibition with an impact comparable to that of any Italian, Dutch, Flemish, French, or Spanish exhibition. Its great period (1350 to about 1500) was followed by one of transition and decline that lasted two centuries in the course of which not a single work to rank with what was being done elsewhere at the time was produced. About the beginning of the 18th century the old tradition was entirely abandoned, icon-painting ceased to be an art, and the new kind of painting, responding to new and primarily secular needs, started its Western apprenticeship from scratch. It grew quickly; by the middle of the century could be taken seriously, and by the beginning of the next had come to occupy a modest but honourable place among the European schools.

Now, it was at this very moment that all European painting moved into a long period of crisis, from which the French alone emerged triumphant. Russian painting of the second half of the century, so far from creating an "important and entirely independent" school (as the Deputy Director of the Tretyakov Gallery puts it in his catalogue introduction), singularly resembles all the other schools at the time, including the French—not, to be sure, as we see it now, but as it was seen till quite recently at the Luxembourg and the provincial museums. The impressionists only became known in Russia at the very end of the century. A revival began which the Revolution did nothing to arrest but which was stifled from the mid-'twenties on by the doctrines, soon to become dogma, of Socialist Realism.

A reasonably organised exhibition should and could have reflected this entire past in all its diversity: all that this one reflects is the ruling prejudice. Of 122 works, 16 are icons (this for five centuries of painting), 8 date from the 18th century, 16 from the first half of the 19th, 8 from the early years of the 20th, but 36 from the second half of the 19th, and 38 from the post-Revolution period. In this way the best periods of Russian art are utterly sacrificed to the worst, and what dominates is precisely academic painting, in the derogatory sense of the term, meaning the use of a language accessible to all as a means of telling stories, whether anecdotal or tendentious. The Soviet artists shown here (excepting Petrov-Vodkin and Saryan) are, of course, using an idiom which is simply a cheap rehash of the "democratic realism" of the 1860s and '70s, a language which was then the current language of European painters—other than the only ones who count.

What is interesting about the galleries devoted to Soviet painting is that they show us not only what the powers-that-be in Russia demand of painting, but also the way in which they see it, and the degree in which they are capable of appreciating it. We return to the other galleries able to understand the reasons for the generally mediocre effect they give.

It is not the *furor ideologicus* alone that has decided the choice of exhibits, it is also the atrophy of taste which is the inevitable consequence of this evil. And this atrophy can be blamed for the disproportions of the respective amount of space given to the various periods of the past—the conjuring away of the renascence that preceded the Revolution, the lack of emphasis given to Alexander Ivanov (five sketches, two of which are not characteristic, and none of the water-colours on New Testament themes which are his finest works) and Vrubel (two good pictures, but not his best, and nothing painted in the last ten years of his life). But then these two distinguished, troubled, unhappy painters, who all their lives unsuccessfully sought a pictorial language which would suit them, cannot easily be classed as "democratic realists." But why not have chosen what is finest in the work of Kramskoy, Repin, Surikov? Why, among the three Serov portraits, is that of Leskov the only one which shows his great talent as a portraitist? Why, instead of showing a score of pictures of this quality (which would have been perfectly possible), triumphantly exhibit in the centre of Gallery V two huge, insipid, trivial paintings by Aivasovski and Shishkin? Among pictures dating from between 1770 and 1850, only three or four could not have been replaced by more successful and more characteristic works by the same artists. There is no painting or icon (by Simon Ushakov, for example) to mark the passage from ancient to modern Russia, but a complete gap between the early 16th century and the 1770s. Finally, the icons are second-rate examples, with four or five exceptions.

Thus, of the 122 works shown at Burlington House, only about a dozen can be classed among the best painting that Russia has produced in the course of the last eight hundred years.

*Wladimir Weidlé*

# Nick Magazines

THE other day, I went to Wakefield *nick* to have a butchers at some magazines. These rags are edited and published by the geezers in the nick, for the geezers in the nick; and the only place where you can clock them is at the Imperial Training School, which, of course, is nothing but a "School for Screws," and is situated in the precincts of this nick.

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Any old how, I creeped round to this gaff, clutching my Home Office pass in my hand, feeling very dodgey indeed. Well, I mean to say, imagine me with a Home Office pass to visit a nick. I flashed the pass at a screw, and the next thing I knew, I was rabbitting away to a geezer who is the Assistant Principal of the School. He is a very nice geezer and also most helpful. I asked him where these magazines originated, and he told me that they were once "Wall Newspapers," that is, some of them, and the others had only started to bring out a rag since the idea had caught on. Wakefield was the first to actually bring out the first one, and the name of it is *New Venture*. Others have names like *New Dawn*, *Leyhill Prison*, *Signpost-Sudbury*, *Prospect-Maidstone*, and so on.

The one I liked best was called the *Pentonville News Bulletin*, it was a right giggle and full of fun. Some of the others were more sober. In fact I had a sneaking sus that *New Dawn* and *New Venture* were a bit too full of art and culture, and that quite a lot of the contributors were nothing but tortured intellectuals.

There was also one from Australia called *Neptune News*, and yet another from Denmark called *Forum*. The latter came from The Psychopathinstitution (all one word) at Herstedvester, but it's called P.H. for short. Apart from very small pieces it was written in some very dodgey language that I could not understand, so that all I could do was cop a deaf 'un to it.

The next morning I went back to the Screw's school and was given a dirty great pile of these magazines, and also an office with the words "CHIEF OFFICER" written on the door!

I sat at the desk and buried myself in these rags. I found that they had everything but the kitchen sink in them. There was poetry, short stories, a sports page, and an editorial, and many other things that we will come to as we go along. As I sat there reading, and making notes, I heard the sound of heavy boots outside in the passage, and then a clank and some geezer banged a bucket down on the stone floor; then the familiar sound of scrubbing. "My good Gawd!" I thought and stuck my boat into another magazine.

CHOIR PRACTICE—sometimes a queer business. This I saw at the bottom of one page, and then a poem at the top of the next: by Shortfellow (with apologies to Longfellow)....

EXCOGITATE

As shades of night were fading fast,
along the Prison wing there passed,
Some messmen, who with footsteps quick,
brought tea and bread and porridge thick.

EXPROPRIATE!

There were four more verses of this, all of which were just as much of a giggle; they ended with ...EXCRUCIATE, EXASPERATE, EXHILARATE, and EXAGGERATE, respectively.

Then I read a piece about "Unmarried Fathers" which had a very serious tone to it. Then a sort of Chit Chat page and letters to the editor. One of these was headed FOLLOW YOUR NOSE, and read as follows:

Sir,

We would respectfully point out that the "Atmospheric Pollution Act," which came into operation on the 1st June, covers the locality in which this establishment stands. It would, we presume, include our RECESSES.

Almost all the contributors wrote anonymously, or under pseudonyms like: *Anon*, *Omega*, *Trog* or *Dead Needled of B Wing*; some of them used Bird's names—*Pauline* and *Minnie* were two.

By this time I had smoked nearly a whole packet of snout and was getting dead cheesed off with this geezer who was scrubbing the deck outside the door, so I was glad when all of a sudden he stopped scrubbing and went clattering off down the passage. A little while after that, someone brought me a cup of coffee which I needed very badly.

Another poem was called I WANT TO GO HOME—here is an extract:

*I want to go home, I'm not happy here;*
*I'll never get used to this atmosphere.*
*I'm sorry I done it, and if that ain't enough,*
*I'll do penance at home where things ain't so tough.*

As I read, I somehow felt that there was something dodgey about these rags. Then all of a sudden I tumbled to what it was. There was not one detrimental reference to any member of the Staff. I wonder if they have the freedom of the Press? I am inclined to doubt it, unless things have changed a great deal in the last two stretch! Although there were some complaints they were very weak, as though the people who wrote them feared repercussions from someone or other. This I can understand, being as how I have had a little experience of the larks that go on in the nick. There was one complaint from a geezer who had only got half a spoonful of jam for his breakfast, instead of a full one, but it was so weak that it was almost not a complaint at all. There was another one from a geezer who appeared to have the dead needle about something. Quote:

Why is it always the three months lay-abouts who gets the farm jobs? Why not let them do their bird on a stool like we do? Give us lags a chance of a farm job in the last months of our bird.

*A con.*

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Underneath it was 'I notice that a lot of right tearaways are on their best behaviour these days, and talking vaguely about getting on the farm party....'

Some of the contributors to the magazines were members of the Prison Staff and nick visitors, etc. Although I am sure that they had the very best intentions when they wrote for them, and it is in fact a credit to them, I personally think that they were out of place in the rag—*e.g.*, the inevitable religious piece by the sky pilot.... Quote: "There has been a lot of talk these days about the Clergy being so heavenly-minded that they are no earthly use...." And a pep talk from an Assistant Governor.

Quotations take up a great deal of space, John Masefield, Benjamin Franklin, Edgar Allan Poe, etc. And right next to their scholarly words might appear something like:

A Grace

*The Lord be praised for I'm amazed,*
*How quickly things have ended.*
*There's ham and eggs for breakfast now,*
*Where porridge was intended.*

One other thing I think is worth mentioning, and that is the great trouble that the geezers go to. They turn out these rags under extreme hardship, for they have almost nothing to work with. The duplicators seem to be breaking down all the time. (This is shown in the reproduction of a great many of them.) The drawings are very primitive, and the cartoons are about barons and the Chief Officer and so on.

Taking this all the way round, I think they may be of some use to geezers doing bird, if only to help pass the time. And I suppose you might say they are a feather in someone's kady.

But magazines or no magazines, I was very chuft to have it away a bit lively, and I don't care if I never see the inside of another nick or screw's school, ever.

*Frank Norman*

# East Side, West Side

Before the war the Dead End Kids were a comic turn. They were pathetic too, of course, but that just made the comedy more appealing. Their success relied on the fact that in liking them, the audience was feeling down, as it were. There is none of this faintly snobbish appeal about *West Side Story* (at Her Majesty's Theatre, in London). The modern counterparts of the Dead End Kids (who used to be, as I recall, on the East Side) have become heroes of our time. Given a little more money in the background and a good deal more pretension to the fore, the West Side delinquents become the arty Beat hipsters of North Beach. Given more money still, an Ivy League university and a rigorous diet of Salinger, the deprived "shook up" becomes the respectably "mixed up." They have them in Russia and France and Germany. We have them here. It is the central theme of the show: at the climax, while the hero and heroine are going to bed together, there is a ballet sequence and a voice singing from the gods to explain that the protagonists are not just a few city roughnecks, they are *all* young people. Granted, the conventions of the musical help immensely: since romance is a great equaliser, musical comedy is one of the few classless forms. But instead of class it has appeal; it really brings in the virily ignorant without changing them into something sweet and quaint. Not so in *West Side Story*. The boy-girl, boy-gang romances may be sentimentalised, but the predicament is not. The show is successful largely because it does not condescend.

But *West Side Story* doesn't succeed because it is sociological or even ambitious; it succeeds because it is alive. I wonder, in fact, if the serious themes are much more than an excuse that allows the authors to deal with this suspect but powerful underside of American post-war success. No doubt a musical comedy could be made of the shiny upper surface—*The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit*, say—but it wouldn't have a quarter the life. For it is the unexcused violence and the stylish aggressions that keep *West Side Story* moving. In comparison, its conventional all-American hero is mealy-mouthed, and even the heroine, although she has the awkward, spontaneous dignity of a Puerto Rican Betsy Blair, is pallid. But the gangs weave and fight and swagger with the blind, nervous intensity that is the New York pace. Gang leaders end with flick knives, tycoons with ulcers, in their stomachs. The cynical violence is the same, but one makes for better drama than the other.

Part of the vitality of *West Side Story*, then, comes from the setting. That faintly condescending, "It-couldn't-happen-here" air that some of the audience seemed to adopt when I saw it may not be wholly flattering to this country. For in England there is a façade of grey respectability that drives violence underground. America specialises in gang wars, we in sex-crimes. The nasty things are more usually in the woodsheds than in the streets. The violence of the Teddy Boys is mean and secretive, whereas that of the New York delinquents though it is no less shocking, does seem part of a genuine ruthless vigour. The violence and drama are in the setting, a fact

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that the choreographer and designer never let you forget. The latter in particular has managed to create on the stage a real impression of the Ben Shahn country: a huge, man-made landscape of tapering walls, girders, and highway viaducts, and, for the balcony scene, a tracery of fire-escapes, extraordinarily delicate, like leafless geometrical trees. It is the same with the dances: there is a passionate movement in the violent jazz energy that is a good deal more eloquent than all the clichés of love and loyalty. At its best, *West Side Story* does not have to excuse anything; it merely has to present the predicament in its fullness. At the same time, it produces its own cynical comments on things, which are also the best moments in the show: "America," the Puerto Ricans' satire on homesickness, and "Gee, Officer Krupke," the delinquents' last word on themselves. One of the best things about *West Side Story* is that even the cynicism is vigorous.

It is, unfortunately, a convention of the musical that wit is left to the faintly off-beat characters. The hero and heroine can only smile indulgently when it happens. Their business instead is to make the straight romance as convincing as the tough parts. And this, however much they struggle—and Miss Marlys Watters fights very hard—is a difficult proposition. The fault is more in the music than the actors. The composer is Mr. Leonard Bernstein, a distinguished conductor of serious orchestras and serious music. As a conductor he knows what kind of music each situation requires; he also knows the ingredients each kind of music requires. So he produces an excellent musical accompaniment to the drama and dance on the stage. The trouble is that the action on the stage stops from time to time and the hero and heroine are left on their own. It is then, when there is nothing going on to distract one's attention from the music, that Mr. Bernstein's rather synthetic style falters. What are lacking, quite simply, are those moments of discovery when the composer produces a new melody out of nowhere. Gershwin or Cole Porter or Richard Rodgers do it effortlessly, but Mr. Bernstein can't manage it. It is when *West Side Story* is most romantically conventional that you realise how much genuine creative gift it takes to maintain even the tired conventions of musical comedy. Mr. Bernstein's score obeys all the laws, but that is about all it does. As the delinquents say, "As a matter of factuality, we suspicion it was done by a cop."

*P. P.*

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# The "Nouvelle Revue Française"

*By D. W. Brogan*

It has been after a visit to Paris that I have tried to make up my mind about the importance of the *NRF* and the utility of this anthology.* And that visit, like many others, had bred in me the conviction that the poet ought to be amended, that the true version is prose not poetry, *"la chair est triste, hélas, et il y a beaucoup trop de livres."* I look in a French weekly, at the five columns of Gallimard books published this year. I think of the crowded bookshops (crowded by customers as well as by books). I think of the amount of brains, energy, paper, ink, devoted to literature and the by-products of literature and I have to fight the conviction that France needs less literature, could do with less talent, if not with less genius, and that the younger generation in this country and America would be well advised from drinking too deeply of the perilous stuff. For me—and for so many others—it is too late. So, the first temptation is to say that this book is a warning. Read it and see what to keep away from! Read it and see what so many young French people (damned by their elders for their barbarian illiteracy) are turning away from!

Such a reaction is not unreasonable, for by the very candour and catholicity of his anthology, Professor O'Brien has given arms to the enemy. For what we have here is not quite "the most significant writings from the *Nouvelle Revue Française*," but the most significant critical and polemical writings. If there is too much literature in France, there has been, nevertheless, in the past generation a great deal of good and some great literature and little of it is directly represented here. We have its shadow, its reverberation, but little of the thing itself. And such a selection assumes in the common reader a great deal of first-hand knowledge that he may not have. (How many people here, for example, read any of Roger Martin du Gard? Consequently, many of the controversies take place in an atmosphere of a common body of knowledge, of amity, of enmity, that comparatively few English or American readers can fully understand and, further consequence, there is a temptation to regard as unimportant, as time-wasting, as dilettantism, much lively and even profound discussion, merely because the discussion takes place in a *"champ clos."*

Thus the only theoretical paper on a non-French teacher is an explanation of Freud by M. Jules Romains, which is also a protest against the long delays of the French intellectuals in accepting Freud and the shallowness of current discussion of him. Three of the very best papers are on D. H. Lawrence (by André Malraux), on Picasso (by André Lhote), and on Mozart (by Pierre-Jean Jouve), but, all in all, this is a French inspection of the French mind almost as introverted as if it had been produced round 1680. It might be objected that if the themes are French, the matrix is our general European culture, that Shakespeare, Goethe, Dostoievsky, Marx, Hegel, Freud, are in the background. But the Greeks were in the background for Racine; there was an Italian and Spanish background as well as a classical background for the culture of *le grand siècle*; that did not make the culture of the age of Louis XIV less French. But France in 1680, in most realms of thought and action, was dominant in Europe. France in the heyday of the *NRF* was not. Necessarily, a nation-centred culture in a nation that is no longer the centre of a super-national culture must be parochial, and that is one of the notes of this anthology. So many things mattered that the *NRF* ignored! Economics was, with physics, attracting the most acute minds all over the Western world but not yet in France—so there is *one* reference to Keynes. So great an event as the Russian Revolution is seen in too literary terms, almost as an aspect of the career

* *NRF. The Most Significant Writings from the Nouvelle Revue Française, 1919–1940.* Edited with an Introduction by Justin O'Brien. Eyre & Spottiswoode. 25s.



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of André Gide. The Chinese upheaval is an aspect of the early work of M. Malraux. The United States makes hardly any impact at all (how different from its literary and artistic impact to-day!). Perhaps to say this is but to say that the *NRF* was mainly a literary periodical and should not be expected to mirror the living controversies of the world as the old *Revue des Deux Mondes* had professed to do. But since we are naturally tempted to awe in presence of French intelligence and culture, I make bold to say that I was quite often reminded of the superiority of *The Times Literary Supplement*, of *The Criterion*, of *Scrutiny*, of *Horizon*.

But—and it is a very important but—I was even more often reminded of the superiority of the *NRF*. First of all it was produced for an extremely intelligent, cultivated, intellectually alert and pugnacious public. No doubt it had its merely snob readers who had to read or, at any rate, buy the *NRF*, as they had to go, if women, to the good houses for their clothes. But there must have been (and there still is) a market for acute, often deep, often learned and always serious literary criticism that is much wider than any we can discern or hope for here. With all its limitation this French (or Parisian) literary world is admirable for many serious and scarce qualities. And if we ask again, what is the utility of this anthology, one good answer (and one that, I suspect, is in Professor O'Brien's mind) is the exemplification of the possibility of such a culture, of the possible existence of something between the "little magazines" and the middle-brow culture damned by Mr. Dwight Macdonald and deserving some if not all of his censure. Here are brows that are broad as well as high.

But that utility is not all or nearly all. There is profit and entertainment as well as edifying example. First of all, the standard of writing is high. The level of translation (even though all the translators are, so we are assured, Ph.D.'s) is very uneven. But even through the clumsiest, if formally faithful versions, the mere technical skill of the writing can be seen. Few styles can be more tedious than the last runnings of the standard French literary style such as can be found in French middlebrow magazines like the *Figaro Littéraire*. Such writing was not encouraged by the *NRF* and that has made the task of translating especially difficult, for many of the contributors had their own private vocabulary and sentence structure. What is full of character in French may seem simply odd in English or American. But having recently had to check a translation of a difficult French author and been thus reduced to humility, I am not disposed to be too superior in my view even of the clumsier versions while I express my admiration for the excellent versions and make only one protest. The quotations from poetry should always have (as some do have) the French text as well as a translation. Even when the translator is as eminent as Mr. Eliot, I want the French, especially when the French is as difficult as that of St-John Perse. •

Then for the profit. One section is of little use except to the student of the French *normalien* mind when it turns to politics. The political pieces are revealing in their vagueness, rhetorical superficiality, absurd parochialism, plain ignorance. Many of them are well-meant, but that is about all one can say. One of the few of any merit is not, from the liberal point of view, at all well-meant, but its toughness stands out like a welcome sore thumb. This is the piece by Drieu La Rochelle that, with courage and excellent good sense, Professor O'Brien prints at the very end. Drieu La Rochelle was the "fascist" editor under whom the old *NRF* died and who having misjudged the particular "wave of the future" he had tried to swim with, died by his own hand. He was a martyr to a bad cause but he shines like a bad deed in a silly world beside the emotional bletherings of Julien Benda. But until the French intellectuals get the Alain bug out of their system, their adventures in politics will be futile, time-wasting, and depressing or comic. It is a lesson that 1958 has taught all over again.

What of the more purely literary sections? They are almost always excellent. It is a pleasure and an illumination to see how the *NRF* treated the death of Proust. For the refusal of the *NRF* team, above all of Gide, to take Proust seriously, was the great original sin of the review. Here is intelligent expiation. It is all the more interesting that these pieces were written before the whole glory of the work could be known (and of course in ignorance of *Jean Santeuil*). There is therefore much more to be said but very little to be unsaid and the article by Charles Du Bos is still the best introduction to Proust that I know. There is one first-class specimen of the literary dispute and explanation, the letters from Gide to François Mauriac. There is a document of great interest for literary and cultural history, André Breton on "Limits, Not Frontiers for Surrealism." There is a masterly and moving explosion of wrath against *homaiserie* in the higher ranks of the educational system from M. Gabriel Marcel. There is a dazzling list of names and there are no contributions stuck in just because of the names (a tribute to the sober judgment and resolution of Professor O'Brien). And, a tribute to the *NRF*, almost all the criticisms I have made are made in the collection itself, for the *NRF* noted and condemned the very faults that it sometimes exemplified. That

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self-critical courage is another lesson, another utility for us that this anthology gives and provides. It also recalls not only the great names that we in the Anglo-Saxon world know, Gide, Valéry, Mauriac, Malraux, but such unduly deprecated men of great talent as Albert Thibaudet and Jean Schlumberger. It recalls Paul Nizan (victim of one of the very ugliest character-assassinations that even French Communists have indulged in). It makes us realise the greatness of what was, in its thirty years of life, *the* review of the Western world—at any rate as far as the arts are concerned. That day is over. There is the *Nouvelle* NOUVELLE REVUE FRANCAISE, a most valuable ornament of the Paris literary scene. But the reasons that Jean Schlumberger attributed to Gide to explain his refusal to join the refloated ship seem valid: *"Il était trop botaniste pour ne pas savoir que toute plante a sa saison."* Reading in this box of treasures (made humanly imperfect by some costume jewellery), we can wonder at the length and richness of the flowering. In his masterly introduction, Professor O'Brien has not overstated the case for the greatest of modern reviews and no one who cares for letters can fail to be moved by the sacred *"nrf,"* the emblem that, with so many other things, the review owes to its sole surviving founder, Jean Schlumberger. That was the *belle époque!* We live in a harder, less hopeful, probably less blossoming age.

# Conditions of Welfare

**Essays on the Welfare State.** By RICHARD M. TITMUSS. *Allen & Unwin.* 20s.

PROFESSOR TITMUSS and a group of able colleagues in London are engaged on a prolonged examination of social service needs and policies. This is a work of exceptional importance both from a practical standpoint, for it should yield definite lines of new policy which future Ministers can implement, and from a humanitarian standpoint, for it fastens attention on what is, in an age of full employment and rising real wages, the worst remaining area of poverty, squalor, and social misfortune.

This book gives an excellent idea of the sort of work which is being done. Like all collections of reprinted articles, it suffers from disunity and repetitiveness; it is not the comprehensive study which Professor Titmuss must one day write or edit. Nevertheless, besides providing important material for the student, it offers the layman a good introduction, humane, wise, and well-written, to that new approach to welfare problems which is justly associated with his name.

Two broad themes run through the essays. One is that the present condition of the "Welfare State" is very different from what is commonly supposed. We may pick out in particular the following widespread misconceptions.

First, that the enormous growth in social expenditure represents "a crushing burden" on national resources, and the main cause of post-war inflation and balance-of-payments crises. The *fact* is that as a proportion of the national income, social expenditure (properly defined) has shown only a modest increase since 1938; while the National Health Service, the most frequent target of such criticism, is actually taking a lower proportion than in its first year of operation.

Secondly, that the social services are redistributive as between rich and poor, and constitute a heavy fiscal burden on the middle and upper classes. The *fact* is that the working class pays in taxation slightly more than it receives in social benefits; and the heavier post-war taxation of the wealthier classes goes to pay for higher "unallocable" benefits (Budget surplus, defence, administration, etc.). This does not mean that the fiscal system has no equalising effects on income-distribution—net incomes are significantly more equal than if there were no taxation and no government expenditure. But there is not a direct transfer of income from rich to poor.

Professor Titmuss goes still further. We must take account, he argues, not only of the government system of social services, but also of the parallel and increasingly important systems of fiscal welfare and occupational welfare. By the former he means allowances and reliefs from income tax—for wives, children, aged or infirm dependants, widowed mothers, etc.: by the latter, the benefits available to particular employees by virtue of their occupation, such as the superannuation benefits, death benefits, health services, meal vouchers, cars, housing, holiday expenses, children's school fees, etc., provided by particular firms or industries. All the former and many of the latter benefits are, he maintains, precisely similar in kind, as judged either by their intention or their effects, to government social services.

These fiscal and occupational allowances of course accrue mainly to the better-off classes, who pay the most income tax and enjoy the most generous occupational benefits in industry. Taking the three systems together, Professor Titmuss argues that so far from leading to greater equality they are actually "enlarging and consolidating the area of social inequality"; and some of his disciples use even stronger language.

But here these writers (the acolytes more than the master) are often misleading, through a lack of economic sophistication. They tend to base statements about equality or inequality on an

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examination of particular taxes or social benefits, without attending to the *total* structure of taxes and benefits. Their statements on this point should be treated with some reserve.

Nevertheless, they do well to draw attention to the often neglected fact that whatever the total effects of fiscal policy, the better-off classes (as a result either of tax-concessions or the terms of their employment) come off uncommonly well compared with the poorer classes in those periods of life (old age, sickness, heavy family responsibilities) in which needs rise sharply relative to income.

A third common misconception is that the Welfare State was "finally established" in 1948, and that "only minor" adjustments and improvements will ever again be needed. The truth is that even the limited Beveridge objective of establishing a national subsistence minimum for social insurance beneficiaries has scarcely been attained—indeed, such beneficiaries are now generally worse off relative to the rest of the population than they were in 1948, while some benefits are actually lower as a proportion of wages than they were before the war; that many smaller categories of dependent persons, such as mental patients, handicapped children, the blind, and the chronic sick, have been grossly neglected and are still living appallingly handicapped lives; and that *new areas* of social misfortune or stress, not visible in the distorting lens of Beveridge over-simplification, have subsequently come to light.

It is this last point which provides Professor Titmuss with his second underlying theme. As the material standard of living rises, primary poverty (or an "absolute" lack of means) will gradually become less important as a source of hardship and dependency than other, more subtle, social causes, which may operate well above a subsistence level of income—"secondary poverty," the smaller size and diminished cohesion of the family, changing attitudes to health and sickness, and the disharmonies between income and needs at different periods of the individual's life. But problems such as these do not yield themselves easily to solution by the "Beveridge" method of isolating broad categories where a purely financial need can be obviously presumed, and then meeting the need by subsistence cash payments. They require an investigation not just of straightforward economic factors, but of underlying socio-psychological factors; and here we need above all the insights of the sociologist and the field-work of the social researcher.

I take one example from this book of the type of new insight which is called for. Sixty years ago the working-class mother typically experienced ten pregnancies, and spent some fifteen years either pregnant or nursing a child in its first year; to-day, the time so spent is on the average four years. Sixty years ago, her expectation of life at twenty was forty-six years; to-day it is fifty-five years. These two changes (of which that in the size of the family has certainly had a greater effect on her standard of living than the rise in real wages) mean that the mother of to-day has a far greater span of life in front of her after completing the cycle of motherhood. This should surely exercise a profound influence on our attitude to the retiring age for women, pension arrangements, employment opportunities, etc., yet social policy has scarcely begun to adapt itself.

In other cases we need patient social research to discover the nature of the new problems. Professor Titmuss gives us a model in his three penetrating essays on the Health Service. His colleagues have also made their contributions—Mr. Brian Abel-Smith again on the Health Service, Messrs. Michael Young and Peter Willmott on housing policy, Mr. Peter Townsend on the problems of old people, Mr. Peter Marris on those of widows, and Mr. John Vaizey on education policy.

If only these writers had been older and could have started writing earlier, we might have

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avoided some of the mistakes of post-war social policy. As it is, some future government, provided it has the vision to find the money, will be able to construct its social policy on more reliable foundations.

*C. A. R. Crosland*

# Common Sense?

**Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare.** By BERTRAND RUSSELL. *Allen & Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

FOR HALF a century, Lord Russell has discussed the issues of the age with lucidity, detachment, and consistent intelligence. As much as anyone in our epoch, he has been the voice of imperturbable rationality against the disorder, incoherence, and nonsense of life. Once again, in an essay of troubled and urgent argument, he appeals in the name of reason to mankind—this time to come to its senses before it blows itself off the planet.

His argument is brisk and straightforward. Given present policies, we are headed straight—inevitably—towards thermonuclear war. Such a war would be ghastly beyond description. Moreover, any war in the nuclear age would billow up into nuclear war; therefore the hope of escape through developing rules of limited war is an illusion. Even the prohibition of the bomb and the destruction of existing nuclear stocks are no guarantee against nuclear war; as soon as serious war resumed, the belligerents would rush to manufacture the forbidden weapon. The only way out is to end war itself. The political leaders of the world must develop a "new outlook." The United States and the Soviet Union must begin by making formal renunciation of war. A Conciliation Committee should be set up, composed of Easterners, Westerners, and neutrals, to settle all the outstanding issues between East and West, without, however, disturbing the existing balance of power. Out of this should grow an International Authority which would forever eliminate war, without, however, impairing the rights and liberties of anyone anywhere.

There is little new in this argument, except the elegance (despite a certain repetitiousness) with which it is presented. But the vision is a deeply appealing one, as it always has been. More than that, Lord Russell is surely right when he suggests that something like this is, in the end, what the world must do if it is to abolish war. And he is surely right too in contending that, if we do not abolish war, war will abolish us. Why then does the case he presents seem so curiously threadbare and banal? The reason perhaps is that, for all the air of saying things of great boldness and audacity, Lord Russell really skips the tough questions. The critical problem is not ends, it is means. As one reads *Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare*, one finds oneself saying: Of course, of course; we hardly need to be told that nuclear war would be a catastrophe or that perpetual peace would be desirable. The problem is not *where* to go but *how* to get there. How, in a world of envy and malice, vested reaction and revolutionary upheaval and raging fanaticism, are we to evolve towards a limited world government capable of suppressing war but not freedom?

Lord Russell's main answer to this question, in so far as he deals with it at all, is reason. As soon as people understand the full horror of the problem, stopping war will seem so much more important than anything else that solution will be almost automatic. Concerning details, he remains vague. In general, he reserves the tough nuts for the Conciliation Committee, though he does make some sketchy and superficial suggestions for Germany, China, and the Middle East. The point is that, given the change in outlook, everything becomes possible.

> Many difficulties which now seem insuperable, or nearly so, would disappear.... Given a sane and sober consideration of what is involved, this harmony on the problems of nuclear weapons would inevitably [*sic*] result.

The power of reason in producing this happy outcome is to be reinforced by the growing sense of urgency. He supports his optimism by illustrations. If, for example, there were an outburst of rabies among the dogs of Berlin, there would obviously be no problem; Eastern and Western authorities would instantly join forces to extirpate the mad dogs.

> Would the authorities of East or West Berlin argue that "the other side" could not be trusted to kill its mad dogs and that, therefore, "our side" must keep up the supply as a deterrent?

If only the world could understand that nuclear weapons created for all mankind the same situation that rabies might create for the authorities of Berlin!

But surely Lord Russell's analogy betrays his argument. Mad dogs may go around biting people, but nuclear weapons don't go around setting themselves off. It is mad people, not mad dogs, which are our trouble; and, when it comes to human beings, diagnosis of madness is a little more difficult and controversial. In an age of ferocious religious wars, like our own, one man's insanity is likely to be another man's ideology. "It is a profound misfortune," Lord Russell writes, "that the whole question of nuclear warfare has become entangled in the

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age-old conflicts of power politics." A misfortune it certainly is; but it is also a fact; and deploring the fact hardly eradicates it. Indeed, the misfortune is precisely the problem. Lord Russell spends too much of his time escaping the problem instead of confronting it.

The clincher in Lord Russell's brief is that, if we do not rapidly reverse our policies and act to bring about world government, then we will move swiftly and inevitably towards extinction. Of course, it is conceivable that he is right. But inevitability is a heavy dose, especially from a philosopher who in the past has looked more sympathetically on the possibility of human freedom. It may be true, as Lord Russell asserts, that "leading statesmen on both sides believe, or profess to believe, that their side might secure a victory in the old-fashioned sense"; but I strongly doubt whether this is so, even of Mr. Dulles, even of Mr. Khrushchev. The arms race may, as he contends, mean an implacably spiralling national expenditure; but it is hard to prove this from the American national security budget, which to-day represents two per cent less of the gross national product than it did in 1954 (and which has even, in real dollars, declined absolutely since Sputnik). It may be true, as Lord Russell says, that "only a constant propaganda of hate and terror will induce populations to accept the burdens involved." It may be true, on the other hand, that such incessant propaganda will only produce boredom and inertia, and that intelligent national leadership, employing calmer and more rational methods, may be more successful in the long run in inducing people to accept burdens. If the arms race continues, Lord Russell writes, "before very long the population in each group will be reduced to subsistence level." Perhaps this may be the result; but certainly there is little evidence of this so far in either the Soviet Union or the United States, where the arms race seems to coexist comfortably with rising mass living standards.

I do not want to propose an attitude of complacency towards the arms race. But Lord Russell does not help his case by overstating it. He of all people hardly needs to be reminded that history has generally outwitted the fatalists and has proved far richer in possibilities than contemporaries have expected. Personally, I do not think that we are going to do what Lord Russell says we have to do in the time he would allow for our salvation. But I doubt whether this condemns us to obliteration. If we can have resolute and imaginative leadership in the West, we will very likely sustain peace long enough under the balance of terror to bring about a gradual relaxation of tension and suspicion. At the same time, if we never tire of exploration

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and negotiation, we may begin to bring certain questions under control—including armaments—through piecemeal agreements. Ideas and attitudes which once terrified people, East or West, will presently begin to seem part of the landscape; new generations will grow up; societies founded in revolution will discover vested interests in stability; systems of international inspection will begin to arouse little more comment than local police; and in time, if each side maintains its strength and morale (and if explosions in the underdeveloped world do not transform the constellation of forces in some unpredictable way), the contours of the crisis will subtly but profoundly alter.

As this alteration takes place, we may well begin to make progress in the direction to which we are summoned by Lord Russell. The question is whether his pamphlet to-day does more to speed us on this course by re-stating the ultimate goal with such urgency than it does to distract us by deprecating the road along which we are most likely to achieve Lord Russell's own purpose.

*Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.*

# Novels

**The Unspeakable Skipton.** By Pamela Hansford Johnson. *Macmillan.* 15s.

**The Little Difference.** By P. B. Abercrombie. *Gollancz.* 13s. 6d.

**To the Islands.** By Randolph Stow. *Macdonald.* 13s. 6d.

**The Common Touch.** By Kathleen Farrell. *Macmillan.* 15s.

**The Fable and the Flesh.** By Michael Lewis. *Weidenfeld and Nicolson.* 16s.

Of all literary leaps, that from straight fiction to comedy seems to me one of the most alarming. Two women make it, and highly successfully, this time, both without any essential change of style, which adds the pleasure of familiarity to the stimulation of surprise. *The Unspeakable Skipton* is comedy at the highest level, where seriousness is part of the humour, and tragedy—its possibility, its implications, at any rate—very close at hand. Skipton, the central figure, and Skipton's way of life, are based on the character and situation of Frederick Rolfe, Baron Corvo, but only in so far as Rolfe was a prototype: Skipton is an individual, a personality in his own right and a rich comic figure on the edge of pathos, as a serious comic figure must always be; and he lives not in Italy but in Bruges, a city whose atmosphere is caught in his affection and in the sound of its bells, where English visitors are frequent and Skipton, with fastidious reluctance, can emerge (since a man must live) from his neat but threadbare hide-out to fleece them. Through poverty and failure and the squalid ways into which he is pressed to earn his bread, Skipton believes unfalteringly in himself: he has the marvellous mistaken arrogance of the lunatic, that may be the divine self-confidence of genius, as well as a social arrogance that seems somehow not snobbish but endearing, and a background so long believed in, so lovingly embroidered, that he can no longer tell how much or how little of it really happened, or even what the word "happened" really means. The triumph of this portrait is to make us, in a curious way, love him: unspeakable Skipton may be, but he holds one's sympathy, and it is the figures of his victims that appear a lot less likeable, and strangely even more predatory, than he is. A literary quartet on holiday, under the awful jurisdiction of a female playwright, pays his rent in various ways during the short time they stay in Bruges: their talk and attitudes are so precisely caught that between them they seem to embody every figure of the sort one has known; yet the satire is never too local for there is always the large figure and relevance of Skipton—the supranational English Catholic gentleman resident abroad, and all the images it invokes—to spread it, as it were, to other sorts of society, other places and values. Miss Hansford Johnson has greatly extended her range; the accuracy, the enviable exact image, the detachment yet deep humanity with which she views and presents her characters, all remain. And, as I seem to have forgotten in remembering its serious after-effects, it is funny in a way so ribald, so exactly acceptable and absurd, that the laughter it provokes has an after-effect of its own—a kind of internal smiling, a savouring and repetition of good moments.

At a simpler level of comedy is a light-hearted novel by the until now very serious P. B. Abercrombie, about a ravishing girl called Vivian Mudge who spends term-time teaching at a progressive girls' school and the holidays trying to keep an amorous balance between the various men in her life. The all-female atmosphere of the school, where the only male creatures are the visiting music master and the gardener, may sound more exaggerated than it is to anyone who has known the inside of a girls' school; and the staff-room's midnight orgies of steak to offset the vegetarian principles of the headmistress strike exactly the right note of hysterical, alarmed defiance. It has the staid exterior of the best-mannered jokes, and a sureness of touch that looks as effortless as Vivian's beauty, both of which should take Miss Abercrombie far if

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she ever cares, as she surely will, to be funny again.

The young Australian poet and novelist Randolph Stow was almost a child prodigy when we first heard of him in this country, and is still young enough to make his third novel, *To the Islands*, seem prodigious in its scope, weight, and ambitions. Mr. Stow has always had a powerful way with places, a formidably strong, almost surrealist imagination, that promised, at the least, an interesting future; but he has now canalised and concentrated his powers, gained enormously in technical confidence, and produced a novel of great originality and depth in the shape of an old man's spiritual adventures in a north Australian wilderness as desolate as the state of his soul. The old man is a missionary who has lost the beliefs that made sense of his life's work: living has become a burden. In a crisis at the mission he sets off on a long, trackless, and on the face of it random journey, losing as he goes the patina of a lifetime, even the final distinction of being a white man in country still in practice owned by its aboriginal owners. The journey does not resolve his original problem, belief is not a sudden lightening, but he grows into understanding of his motives, believing himself a murderer because he wanted to kill a man, admitting love where he thought there had been only hatred. Mr. Stow's talents are wasted in dealing with everyday life and people: his sketch of a love affair is singularly unintense, and the ordinary mission workers are barely distinguishable from one another. But give him a soul in a wild landscape and he rises to his opportunity: his writing swells with a dark power that makes it seem, in the true sense, inspired, as if its author were some sort of medium, repeating from a rapt imagination. There are moments in this hybrid, unwieldy book when the wanderer seems to speak a language inexplicable even to his creator, to carry in him, to develop as he grows in weary stature, feelings and thoughts too elliptical, too concentrated, for language, and, as it were, to outstrip the technical resources of his remarkable author: his technical, but not, I think, his spiritual resources, which is saying (when you have followed the old man's progress) a great deal.

Originality of style, an individual and unmistakable voice, is rare even in that most idiosyncratic of activities, novel-writing; even good writers often sound interchangeable, even brilliant quotations are seldom unmistakable. Kathleen Farrell, by adopting a misleadingly conversational tone, really manages to give the impression of a single voice—the voice of her heroine Marianne, who gingerly and charmingly looks out on a world of tragedy and failure without allowing the tragic or the pitiable emotions to arise in her. "Happy? I ask myself," she ends the book. "Yes, on the whole, quite, quite happy." *The Common Touch* is ostensibly the sketch of a holiday love-affair, in the framework of a comedy of manners. With two elderly siblings, Lucy and Arnold, Marianne sets off as paid companion to smooth their way in that smooth country Switzerland; with Arnold fretting over his health, Lucy faintly tactless, inconsiderate, and domineering, and the pair of them bickering, on and off, with each other, the trip is hardly a joy-ride, but, with good humour and an almost lifelong affection for the old pair, she manages. Then the most unsuitable—well, by Lucy's standards the most unsuitable—of unattached men, a professional Swiss guide called Johnny, who speaks five languages badly, calls her "honey," wears a perpetual mackintosh with bulging newspaper-stuffed pockets, is fattish, and seems to fall rather rapidly in love with her, turns up (Marianne, by the way, being in her late 'thirties, unattached too, "small, brown hair, *gentille*, and not stoopid, which gives a different look," as Johnny describes her); and what later looks like a straightforward case of jilting turns out a complex case of outside interference. Only half-way home from Switzerland

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does Marianne discover (having meantime discovered what Lucy and Arnold's staid exteriors have hidden for half a lifetime) the nature of Lucy's friendship, the depths of smiling, prevaricating malice—or is it all well-meant, to save Marianne from social disaster? So many questions remain unanswered, so many things that need saying (as in life) remain unsaid. Miss Farrell writes superbly good dialogue, with the back and forwardness, the repetitions and amendments of life: even the polyglot Johnny's absurdly off-key English, with everything he says meaning something slightly different, is perfectly right and at the right moments perfectly moving. Deftness, tact, and intelligence are not, perhaps, the most resounding qualities to praise with, but where the intelligence is as high, the deftness as sensitive, the tact as humorous, they give a short novel like this one the gleam of something in its small way entirely satisfying and satisfactory.

*The Fable and the Flesh* is a first novel, interesting for what it stands for rather than for what it achieves, and noticeable mainly for the extreme and at first persuasive assurance of its author, Michael Lewis. It seems to stand for a good many attitudes (of style and outlook and behaviour and manners and so on) current today; in fact to be a representative novel, even something of a portent.

The most portentous thing about it (in both senses) is its hero, who, though young and almost permanently angry, is not in the usual sense of the initials an AYM, for he has a private income and obviously never lived (the classic qualification) in a house with an outside lavatory. Rather he is a splenetic young man, liable to ill-natured and worse-mannered explosions the moment the fancy takes him; and at twenty-eight, having lived what is known as a "full" life with the sort of joyless doggedness displayed by everyone else in the book in pursuit of the same sort of fullness, he has the weary sophistication and some of the mannerisms of an elderly roué, or, if you prefer it, a dirty old man. He belongs to one of those bush-telegraph gangs that always seem more literary than actual, composed of people who keep meeting by chance in street or pub, no matter what part of London they happen to be in, who take an enormous interest in one another's affairs and cats-cradle all their separate existences; and falls in love with a lesbian (she had to be, of course) called Charlotte, who, though his own age, has "lived" at much the same pace: indeed, the whole book suggests that no one ever lives at any other. What I find most portentous (again in both senses) about these absurd and unimaginable young people is that, however few years they have had to fit it in, they have managed to do just about everything: have been everywhere, seen everything, eaten and drunk everything, know the answers to the subtlest hints and innuendoes; in fact, they are intellectual James Bonds, but without any tongue-in-cheek about it. When the hero finally sang his Charlotte a love-song in Provençal ("The accent, I'm afraid, is rather awful"), and, what's more, she understood it, I burst into fits of laughter. The writing is sometimes shrewd and wiry, sometimes unintelligibly turgid; one paragraph I have read conscientiously twenty times without being able to understand a word it means (page 14, the one that starts: "After all, it's not as if she were your mistress..."). Its exuberance is often hypnotic: I only hope the hero sets no fashions, for there are enough low-lifemanship snobs about already, heaven knows.

*Isabel Quigly*

# Chintz, Chits, Cheetahs

**Origins.** By ERIC PARTRIDGE. *Routledge & Kegan Paul.* £4 10s.

*ORIGINS* is no more than a fancy name for (as its own sub-title has it) "A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English." Such a dictionary, as Mr. Partridge points out, "supplies neither pronunciations nor definitions." It is concerned only with histories and relationships, a sort of Burke or Debrett of language, except that *all* family-trees, whether noble or workaday, are traced with the same impartial care. Such a work has long been needed. Neither Weekley's nor Holthausen's compilations ever went really far to replace the 19th-century dictionaries of Skeat, which have remained invaluable. Since Skeat's day, however, the science of etymology has inevitably progressed, new facts have been discovered, old theories exploded: the necessary revisions and corrections have awaited an incorporator.

What will the reader find in *Origins*? The most striking thing will be that the words are listed, not alphabetically, but under such headwords as correspond most closely to their roots. Thus if he looks up *tweed*, he will find it of course properly ensconced between *tweak* and *tweedledum* but this entry will merely refer him to the head-word *TWO*. There he will find that it belongs to a family which includes *twain, twin, twice, twelve, twenty, twill, twilight, twine, twist, betwixt,* and *between*: a cross-reference will direct him to the cognate head-word *DUO*, with such allies as *dual, duel, duet, deuce, double, dozen, doubt*, and *duodenum*. (It may amuse the reader to trace the idea of "twoness" in all these words: thus *doubt* comes from

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Latin *dubitare*, intensive of *dubare*, "to be in two minds").

Many of these collocations are perfect material for the odd-fact hunter. Who, for instance, would have guessed that *cheetah*, *chintz*, and *chit* (document, note) all spring from a single Hindu root that means "dark spots on a light background"? I have always been told, and am glad to see confirmed, that *effendi* is a variant of *authentic*, the link being the Greek *authentes* (pronounced in Modern Greek *aftendis*), "a private gentleman." All philologists will know what slander is etymologically enshrined against the Bulgars; it is amusing to find that the Maccabees are similarly accused of being *macabre*.

IT MAY be possible to decide on a single reading whether or not a novel is a good novel. Not so in the case of the dictionary, which is much more a wife than mistress and must be long lived with before such decisions can be taken. I have in fact long lived with *Skeat's Concise* and know it for the excellent handbook that it is; it may therefore be used as a yardstick by which to assess *Partridge*. Take a single keyword, the Latin *caput*. It has almost every possible merit as an etymological example (as I know well from experience as a lecturer): Grimm's Law, as applied to every single consonant of it, gives the Germanic form *hafud*, Anglo-Saxon *heafod*, Modern English *head*; *caput* in Latin proliferates its forms, *head* in English proliferates its meanings, a neat demonstration of the different genii of Germanic and Romance. Partridge's list includes, from Latin direct: *capital* [head town, head of column—and for the monetary sense compare head of water]; *decapitate* [behead]; *precipitous* [headlong]; *capitation* [head or poll tax]; *captain* [head soldier]; *biceps, sinciput, occiput*. From Latin through French: *chief, chieftain* [head of tribe]; *chef* [head cook]; *handkerchief* [couvrechef, head-covering]; *mischief* [no English parallel]; *achieve* [bring to a head], *achievement, hatchment*; *cap, cape, cope, caparison, chaperon, chaplet, chapel, chaplain, copingstone*; *chapter* [heading]; and *cattle* and *chattel* [for which compare the monetary sense of capital]. This list, which merely sketches rather than exhausts—and is decidedly less puzzling (I might add) than the connections of the average English Duke—should at least indicate something of the richness of invention and suggestion lying to hand in a dictionary of this type (and incidentally how it is that the English poet who writes *head* has so much more powerful, and for that matter dangerous, a weapon to his hand than the French poet who writes *chef* or *tête*).

What happens when we compare *Skeat*? His list is certainly a little shorter (though not much) and omits, for example, *chaperon, chaplain, chef*. On the other hand, he gives *capuchin* and *capitol*, which Partridge does not. He gives *cabbage* (which certainly has a head), deriving it differently but no less probably than Partridge, who does not—indeed a minor complaint against Partridge would be that he tends to adopt one of alternative derivations too firmly, giving not even so much as a mention to the other. Skeat gives *escape* and *corporal* [folk-etymology for the French *caporal*] which Partridge equally refers back to *caput* but fails to give cross-references for. Skeat distinguishes between *capital* of a column [from Latin *capitellum*] and *capital* in its other senses [from Latin *capitalis*], a distinction which may be true or false for all I know but is not to be found in Partridge in any case. The preliminary verdict must be that Skeat, though admirably supplemented by his modern rival, is not quite due for the back-shelf yet; and Mr. Partridge's remark that Skeat "treats words so briefly and ignores ramifications so wholeheartedly that it was easy to plan a work entirely different" is neither generous nor true.

*Origins*, evidently Mr. Partridge's masterwork, is a "Short" dictionary only in the sense

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in which that word is applied to "The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary": that is to say that it is a noble quarto, full, lucid, and admirably written, and equally admirably produced. In all senses of the phrases, it is a work which it is a pleasure both to read and to hold.

*Hilary Corke*

## Pages of *Négritude*

**Black Orpheus.** Published by the MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, IBADAN, NIGERIA. 5s.

ASTUTE old England, well aware that in a short year's time an erstwhile colony will become an African nation that possesses a population equal to her own, the largest Negro city in the world, great wealth of nature, and a flux of ancient cultures bubbling with resurgent youth—that is, Nigeria—has lost no opportunity of preparing the way for harmonious Commonwealth relations by vigorously propagating a knowledge of West African arts among us. It is to this generous and forward-looking spirit that we in England owe the splendid displays of African dancing and drumming we have witnessed in such profusion, the recitals of poetry and music, the exhibitions of painting and of sculpture, and, most of all, perhaps, the excellent books and periodicals that have explained West African culture to the Britons.

In fact, of course, astute old England has done nothing of the kind. Out of the Western countries of the huge continent, bursting with futurity and force, only a miserable trickle of artistic information has yet reached us. For this reason alone, we may specially welcome the revue *Black Orpheus*, which first appeared in September 1957, and has now printed three more numbers. It has 60-odd pages, including plates, and publishes articles, poems, stories, and reviews chiefly written by West African authors, but also by interested Europeans, and by Negro writers in the Caribbean and the United States. It is edited, characteristically, by two writers of German origin: Ulli Beier, who teaches at the University of Ibadan, and is also joint editor of the journal of Yoruba studies, *Odu*, and Janheinz Jahn, already well known by the anthologies of Negro poetry that he has published.

*Black Orpheus* is thus no parish magazine of authors in British West Africa, but an international revue of all those writers for whom the conception of *Négritude*, as propounded by Aimé Césaire, the poet of Martinique, is a reality: the conception of a Negro culture, centred on Africa, but by no means confined to it, which has a growing social-political impulse in the late 20th-century world. So while there are contributions by Nigerian scholars, on, for instance, the art and poetry of the Yoruba people, there are also poems by French and Spanish-speaking Negroes, like Césaire himself, or the equally illustrious Léopold Sédar Senghor from Sénégal.

French Africa, in fact, has hitherto produced far more writers than have the British territories, and has welcomed them more enthusiastically in Europe. This is partly because the French, wishing (for political reasons) to "assimilate" the Africans they rule, have sought to "Europeanise" their intellectuals more intensely—with the consequence that the Africans write impeccable French, while remaining more resolutely nationalist than ever. In British West Africa, on the other hand, artists and writers have been left, as they are in the United Kingdom, to sink or swim, or desperately tread water, as best they can. But *Black Orpheus* shows that, besides the splendid eccentric Amos Tutuola whom we already know (perhaps too well), writers undoubtedly abound, prepared to take us by surprise, as did, earlier on, the novelists from the Caribbean: as if West Africa, like the West Indies, were a region of which we had hitherto known absolutely nothing.

*Colin MacInnes*

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# FROM THE OTHER SHORE

## The Intellectual Mafia, or "Moral Terrorism"

POLISH writers are continuing to resist Party pressures. The "ideological offensive" against them has so far been singularly unsuccessful.

At the Twelfth Party Plenum, held in October 1958, the three literary members of the Central Committee—the philosopher, Adam Schaff; the Stalinist ex-boss of the Writers' Union, Leon Kruczkowski; and the former Ambassador to France, Jerzy Putrament—have all complained about writers' resistance and put forward proposals to deal with it.

Adam Schaff remarked:

> In the present situation we shall not achieve much simply by argumentation, and comrades who work in our intellectual environment know very well why.... There is a kind of moral terrorism operating there, very small but quite influential *vis-à-vis* its members. These comrades who do not have to deal with this cannot realise the force that is represented by the "Left" snobbery of the intellectuals. They are often influenced by a few friends at a café table, friends whom an individual meets, and whose opinions will often be more important to him than many of our appeals and attempts to convince....

Kruczkowski charged the intellectuals with being particularly susceptible to the influence of "obscurantist forces":

> They have not the courage to oppose strongly that special terror which still exists in that milieu, a terror of the Mafia type....

Putrament pointed out that "the question of the Party's interest in matters of culture is of primary importance." But there were disagreements as to the method of reimposing the Party tutelage on the writers. Gomulka himself warned that "to give up persuasion and use only administrative methods would be the worst possible error."

On the eve of the annual Writers' Congress, the chief theoretician in the Politbureau and secretary of the Central Committee, Jerzy Morawski, explained the Party line to editors and writers:

> The successes achieved by the Party during the last two years were won without proper help, and often against the opposition of many comrades from the ideological front....The participation of our intellectuals in the solution of these problems is still too small. There are many people in these circles who were regarded as Marxists, but who are (at least temporarily) lost to our cause. They have lost themselves. They capitulated before the bourgeois ideology. They persist in their obsession and are gradually passing to the enemy positions. They must be eliminated from our ranks, and prevented from misguiding public opinion.

Putrament attacked the present, democratically elected, Presidium of the Writers' Union in *Trybuna Literacka* (December 14th, 1958) asserting that some of its actions "show conclusively the political direction of the Union which, unfortunately, cannot be considered correct." However, in an interview published in *Zycie Literackie* (December 14th, 1958) a day before the Writers' Congress, Antoni Slonimski, the head of the Union, pointed out that "the election of the Warsaw delegates to the Wroclaw Congress is undoubted proof of the confidence of the literary milieu in the present Presidium of the Union." This was no idle remark —for Kruczkowski and Putrament failed to be elected delegates to the Congress.

The solidarity was remarkable. A resolution was passed calling for "a defence of the freedom of expression," and protesting against the mounting censorship which recently prevented some thirty books from appearing.

During the debates, the essayist, Pawel Hertz, claimed that censorship was actually illegal (since it has no place in the Polish constitution). A poet, Mieczyslaw Jastrun, complained that the censors were "confiscating not only the thunder but even the clouds...." Another poet, Jerzy Zagorski, disclosed that a poem of his had been banned because it contained the expression "the dove of hypocrisy"; the censor had argued that it might be understood as an allusion to the Communist "dove of peace." Antoni Slonimski remarked, with his customary irony, that the writers were being called on "to strengthen the hearts of... the administrative apparatus."

In this tug-o'-war the odds are, of course, heavily weighted against the writers. Manuscripts remain unpublished, assignments become vague, fees become few and far between. But there is apparently no spirit of capitulation. Wiktor Woroszylski, the young revisionist writer who some time ago was deprived of the editorship of *Nowa Kultura*, made the following comment on "revisionism in literature" in an interview published by *Zycie Literackie* (No. 39, 1958):

> The term "revisionism in literature" presupposes the existence of a permanent and unchanging model of literature, a deviation from which is something reprehensible. To accept this is to abolish from the start the possibility of creating literature. That should be obvious. I do not take such reproaches too tragically. Things change, and there is a chronic tendency for such threatening assessments to become obsolete. After all, it is not so long ago that the authors who were previously regarded as revisionists and deviationists were rehabilitated and their works saw daylight again....

John Kenneth Galbraith reported in these pages a few months ago that pessimists in Poland were saying: "How terrible is the past that awaits us." The optimists have their own formula: "The pre-



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THE ATTITUDES of poets on the other shore in 1958 may be gauged from the following (possibly non-representative) sample:

**Soviet Russia:** Alexander Twardowskii, who as the chief editor of the literary magazine, *Novyi Mir*, signed a letter of the editorial board condemning Pasternak (No. 11, 1958) had published some four months before (No. 7, 1958) the following poem:

TO MY CRITICS

*You all try to give me*
*This one piece of advice—*
*Sing, by all means, but don't hear, don't see!*
*Only what's permitted is nice.*

*I haven't listened to you in vain.*
*Yet I fear that when these times*
*Are forgotten, you'll speak once again:*
*Did you hear, see nothing, in your rhymes?*

**Poland:** Antoni Slonimski, the head of the Writers' Union, reflects sadly (*Nowa Kultura*, August 17th, 1958):

LYING

*Lying—the fifth element*
*(the phrase is Leonardo's)—*
*Taking the form of printer's ink*
*Oozes from the daily columns*
*Onto roofs of houses, tar of streets.*
*Apparently nothing has changed,*
*Only that the official's face has gained a grimace,*
*Only that I am sitting alone at the table*
*Looking at staircases without banisters,*
*Which lead nowhere.*
*Plucked strings remain mute.*

**Hungary:** In the official *Elet es Irodalom* (February 14th, 1958), there is this poem by Ferenc Jankovics:

*Why? If the leaders are bad,*
*is the idea false?*

*Why? If the shepherd is bad,*
*must I leave the flock?*

*Why? If they throw me on a bonfire,*
*must I at once jump in a pond?*

*Why? If they beat me,*
*must I beat the innocent?*

*Why? If there is no wheat,*
*must the Muse be silent?*

*If there were wheat,*
*would the Muse sing better?*

*Why? If villainy rules,*
*should justice die?*

*If barbarism bellows,*
*will there be freedom nevermore?*

*My God, strengthen me,*
*let me remain a compass,*

*Until my strength is consumed,*
*purified, still fighting.*

*Since I have pen in hand,*
*let it not fall amiss.*

*But nail words with my writing*
*for the people who call. Thus . . . my faith.*

**Czechoslovakia:** Even the "most loyal" satellite produces some highly ambiguous verse, *e.g.*, the poem by the late Vitezslav Nezval in *Literarni Noviny* (May 31st, 1958):

I SEE CITIES

*I believe this dream will come true one day:*
*My works will be rehabilitated!*
*There will be a world without wars*
*Just round the corner of time.*
*And a city enclosed in a garden,*
*A city planned by the people for themselves*
*Just as Goethe planned his sunny Weimar.*
*A city without offices and rumbling boulevards,*
*Houses close to wells and ponds.*
*A house where a man dwells who does not*
*Leave his wife for a younger woman.*
*A city in which there are no thieves who steal*
*Gold, silver, and human feelings. . . .*

**East Germany:** How far from his brilliant early Expressionism is this lyric by the recently deceased Minister of Culture, Johannes R. Becher (who during the last years of his life wrote only in a "socialist realist" style):

*Great songs were sung*
*By poets of old*
*On the destiny of Man.*
*The greatest of all*
*Is sung in our time.*
*We sing*
*Of the Five Year Plan.*

**China:** From *Jen Min Jih Pao* (April 21st, 1958) an example of the verse which Chinese poets have been asked to write:

*My sweetheart is at Hungmeichuang south of the mountain,*
*I am at Hsinghuatsun north of the mountain.*
*I want to sing a song for him,*
*But the mountain stops my voice.*
*I want to send him a flower,*
*But the mountain people embarrass me.*
*This year the co-op unites both sides as one family,*
*And I can meet him all day and talk to his heart.*

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sent is what in the past has been described as Our Glorious Future, and what in the future will be called The Era of Errors and Distortions."

•

**True Colours**

THE efforts of the post-revolutionary Hungarian régime to obtain "intellectual co-operation" have not been quite successful, but the "writers' strike" is no longer the method of resistance. Well-known writers, many of whom played a rôle in the revolution, still maintain an aloof attitude, but they no longer refuse to publish. Many of them are still in prison. Only three (Zoltan Zelk, Domokos Varga, and Bela Nemeth) of the imprisoned intellectuals were recently released.

The Director of Hungarian State Publishing, Bela Kopeczi, has announced in his report that the situation is "satisfactory":

> Eighteen months after the counter-revolution we can state that our literature shows a development which even the most ardent optimists did not believe possible in November 1956. At that time they talked of a Writers' Strike, of the opposition to the People's régime, and of the rejection of socialist realism. It was a difficult situation in our literary life. Time, patience, tact, and particularly a sound general policy was needed for our writers to find their way out of the crisis. . . . (*Nepszabadsag*, June 29th, 1958.)

But the Hungarian writers are apparently prepared to pay only the most modest "price of compromise." Erno Urban, himself a writer and member of parliament, charged them with failing to express political attitudes:

> It is true that the writers are active. Yet they hardly publish anything in the daily press and periodicals. . . . They should take up the most burning and topical questions, and show their true colours. (*Magyar Nemzet*, June 22nd, 1958.)

Similarly, Gyorgy Bolonyi, who is the chairman of the Literary Council (and of the Hungarian PEN Club), complained:

> There are many writers, and there are as many conceptions, hesitant attitudes, different judgments of the past, and interpretations of the present. . . . There are nearly defunct volcanoes waiting for a world-political event to break forth again. . . . There are people who only feel at home in the magic circle of certain fading literary personalities." (*Elet Es Irodalom*, March 21st, 1958.)

The literary subjects are not quite satisfactory:

> With regard to subjects and the means used to describe them, most of our writers are lagging behind and have got stuck in the mud. . . . Generally speaking, what are the stories which some of our writers tell? Well, it happens that we have to read about a murder for pleasure and its careful preparation, to which Freudian analyses are attached; in another story a sadist exploits all the possibilities given to him by a sick writer's mind; a third novel is a veritable assembly of homosexuals. . . . (Jozsef Fodor, *Nepszava*, August 31st, 1958.)

As the attempt to break the resistance of the old well-known writers has proved so difficult, Bolonyi advises (in one of the most unusual uses of the word "October" since 1917) "to rush and meet the new, untouched generation, left undisturbed by the propaganda of October and the times preceding October. . . ."

Alongside this policy of promoting the young, the unknown, and the provincial writers, efforts to induce the literary stars to collaborate went undiminished. These have met only with partial success. The Party seems to be ready to accept (for the time being) writers who have refrained from abject self-criticism or critique of revisionism—provided only that they do write and publish. Many writers, for their part, are willing to go along—if the Party demands on their literary conscience are not too excessive. This is clearly reflected in an interview given by Aron Tamasi in *Magyar Nemzet* (November 23rd, 1958), wherein he declares himself in favour "of the building of socialism, the people's power and the protection of peace," but emphasises the writer's right of free criticism and argues that current difficulties are due to the fact that the government and the writers disagree on what is "useful and artistic" in literature.

What the "difficulties" are was frankly taken up by the Party literary spokesman, Lajos Mesterhazy (*Nepszabadsag*, March 15th, 1958):

> In this year's list of Kossuth Prize winners, the names of writers were lacking. Does this fact indicate an underestimation of literature? It is certain that our literature, recovering and reawakening after grave ordeals, will soon create new works excellent both from the ideological and artistic point of view, and worthy of the Kossuth Prize. But would it have been more correct to overlook the fact that at present there are no such works, by awarding writers who, though loyal servants of progress, did not produce works deserving the Kossuth Prize? Or should prizes have been awarded to works which, although artistically good, do not advance the cause? . . .

The recent editorials in *Elet es Irodalom* underline the cruel dilemma of the régime. The Party must re-impose political controls over literature with one hand—and demand masterpieces from the writers with the other. This has become a slightly absurd stance in all Communist countries, and more than that in Hungary, with its "Petöfi revolution" of 1956 on the subjects of art, sincerity, truth, and freedom. As Zoltan Zelk (who is a Kossuth Prize winner, and who was recently released from prison) put it in his speech to the Petöfi circle in Budapest before the October days:

> I know now that I gave up my principles, the pure faith of my youth, when I believed that a true cause may be served without honesty, without morals, and without regard for national tradition. I know now that this is impossible. . . .

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# LETTERS

## Antiseptic Hansaviertel?

DEBUNKING is almost always fun, but it becomes especially distressing when it is wildly wide of the mark. "Rotterdam, Roehampton, the Moscow suburbs, the *Hansaviertel* at Berlin," Ian Nairn writes ["The Antiseptic City," ENCOUNTER, February] "all share a fundamental lifelessness which makes the surface differences of architectural style seem unimportant and often a bit ludicrous." Nairn's idea is that "use-zoning is a disaster for the vitality of a city, which makes its impact from the multiplicity of things all thrown together" and which should be "a place for everyone—tarts as well as good girls, spivs as well as model husbands. . . ." Well, I don't know much about the Moscow suburbs, or about Roehampton. But as a Berliner I would like to register an objection on behalf of the *Hansaviertel*. First of all, I simply cannot find the differences of architectural style in this exciting international experiment to be merely of "surface" character. There are 15-storey towers, there are long-stretched rows of houses, as well as one-floor family-structures—in a ceaselessly changing pattern, created by some two dozen architects from all over the world. If the *Hansaviertel* does not come alive with a sense of variety and dynamism, then Ian Nairn must be the only observer so far who thinks so. "Sterile"? On the contrary, if anything were to be said against the architecture of the *Hansaviertel* it would be on the grounds that it is a bit *too* full of colour and movement. As for Nairn's worry about girls good and bad, I suppose his attention should be drawn to the fact that a *Hansaviertel*-heartache could be appeased by a brief ten-minute stroll to the south—which is Berlin's traditional "entertainment centre," around the Kurfürstendamm. He would, I presume, find the tarts there, but also Italian opera, Chinese restaurants, and German gambling *kasinos*. The *Hansaviertel*, I am afraid, scarcely needs a Piccadilly Circus of its own.

ALFRED KELLNER

*Berlin*

## Mind and World

IN "My Present View of the World" (ENCOUNTER, January), Bertrand Russell writes that "there is supposed to be a gulf between mind and matter, and a mystery which it is held in some degree impious to try to dissipate. I believe, for my part, that there is no greater mystery than there is in the transformation by the radio of electro-magnetic waves into sounds."

Surely this is either a verbal slip or a false analogy? The radio does not transform electro-magnetic waves into sounds, but into sound-waves in the air. The process can be followed through in mathematical terms: in this sense it is fully understood. This is not true of the process whereby the impact of sound-waves on the ear, causing volleys of nerve-impulses to flow up into the brain, is followed by the conscious experience of hearing sounds. We are not justified in saying that the nerve-and-brain activities are "transformed" into sounds: the two sets of events, the volleys of nerve-signals and the hearing of a sound, *appear* to have nothing in common. There must be some intimate relation between them, for if the signals are distorted, the heard sound will be distorted. But *how* they are related—well, we need not call it a "mystery," a word disliked with some reason by most scientists, but we are bound to say we do not know; and Russell's analogy of a radio set (if he really intends it) is not only not helpful in this connection, but positively misleading.

Again, Russell's definition of a "mind" as "a collection of events connected with each other by memory-chains backwards and forwards," though it may be useful for certain special purposes, is a very thin one, a ghostly abstraction from experience. It seems not to recognise the rôle actually played by mind in perception of the outer world. For this is not a merely passive, receiving rôle, nor is it confined to linking up precepts with memories. If we were not always bringing concepts to meet our percepts, the world would make no sense—it would remain for us the "great blooming buzzing confusion" which William James thought it must be for the new-born infant. And this conceptual activity, which brings order into the confusion and profusion of percepts, does not exhaust the rôle of mind.

Consider the hearing of sounds. They are not normally pure tones and nothing else. Even a single sound generally has some expressive quality —harsh, sweet, etc., or it may indicate pain or joy. It communicates to the mind, through the pattern of its overtones, something that is not itself sound, but a kind of rudimentary meaning.

When sounds are heard in combination, their capacity for communicating meaning is of course immeasurably enhanced. In speech, they communicate a definable meaning; in poetry, the meaning may be less precisely definable; in music, the meaning is generally indefinable, but nevertheless real, or we should not think it worth while to spend much time listening to music. Sounds therefore act as carriers of meaning; and the mind is equipped both to hear the sounds and—by looking as it were through their pattern of relationships—to perceive their meaning. These are distinct activities: one can hear perfectly the sounds of a foreign language without deriving any meaning from them. The patterns of oriental music carry little meaning to unversed Western ears.

Possibly a rather similar process may apply to the hearing of sounds itself. It is not very easy to believe that the volleys of impulses which pass up the auditory nerve (no different in kind, but only in pattern, from those which pass up the optic nerve) can carry all the information which is embodied in the hearing of sounds, for the experience of hearing sounds, with their varying qualities, is so much richer than the kind of experience to be



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had from translating a code (the same is perhaps even more obviously true of the experience of seeing). Let us suppose that the nerve-impulses are, rather, a means of establishing communication between the perceiving mind and the outer world. If all incoming nerve-signals are shut off, the mind dwells in a dark room. The effect of a message from one of the senses is, perhaps, not so much to bring the outer world into the mind as to open a kind of window through which the mind can look out and perceive.

Of course the window metaphor is far too crude, for the message does not simply give the mind access to the outer world; it closely determines, by its pattern, what will be heard or seen. There is a kind of attunement, as though the message establishes an aperture of a particular pattern, through which one thing only can be perceived. But all such metaphors are obviously inadequate The point I am—very speculatively—suggesting is that the mind may not simply receive information through the senses; it may be stimulated by the nerve-signals to a perceptive activity of its own. On this basis, the nerve-signals would act as a means of establishing communication between the outer world and the mind.

I know it is unfashionable to suppose that mind has any existence apart from brain. But if it is true that research has been hampered in the past by too lofty assumptions about mind, so might future research be hampered by making a dogma of the view that mind and brain are the same thing called by different names. It is too early for any dogmas in this field.

CHARLES DAVY

*Amberley, Sussex*

## A Reply by Bertrand Russell

MR. CHARLES DAVY's "Mind and World" shows me once more that I have failed to make my opinions clear. I am accused by Communists of being an idealist, and it seems that Mr. Davy and those who think as he does consider me a materialist. I do not, in fact, think that either mind or matter is part of the stuff of the world. I think that minds and bits of matter are convenient aggregations, like cricket clubs or football clubs. Mr. Davy, in the last paragraph of his discussion, says: "I know it is unfashionable to suppose that mind has any existence apart from brain." My own view is that a brain is composed of thoughts; in fact, of the very thoughts of which we become aware by self-observation as well as of other thoughts that we do not notice. I think that the objects dealt with by physics are assemblages of brief interrelated events which cannot be *known* to be very different in character from thoughts. The change from sound-waves to sounds that we experience is not, in reality, anything like so great a change as it seems to those who are misled by Cartesian dualism.

I am taken to task by Mr. Davy for speaking of "the transformation by the radio of electro-magnetic waves into sounds." I should have done better, as he points out, to have said "sound-waves," rather than "sounds," but, when he goes on to say that the transformation of electro-magnetic waves into sound-waves is understood in a sense in which the transformation of sound-waves into sounds is not understood, he says something with which I cannot agree. We know the laws of the transformation in each case. If we did not, we could not make machines that would generate intended sounds in hearers. As regards the intrinsic character of the events concerned, we know this in the case of heard sounds, but not in the case of the waves that give rise to them. Our ignorance of the intrinsic character of everything non-mental is not usually realised because people think that what they see is physical, whereas, in fact, it is mental. On this point, I agree with Berkeley, though I disagree with him in that I think we have reason to believe in the existence of things that are probably not mental.

My definition of a mind by means of memory-chains appears to Mr. Davy objectionable. He seems to think that I mean to say there is nothing else in a mind. This is not my meaning. I am concerned only to explain what makes some mental events belong to one biography, and others, to another. For those who believe in an ego or soul, this problem does not arise; but if the ego as a subsistent entity is rejected, it becomes necessary to find some other characteristic by which to define the unity of one biography.

Mr. Davy says various things about meaning which he seems to consider that I should disagree with. In fact, I disagree little, if at all, with what he says on this subject, as he will see if he consults my discussion of meaning in *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*.

I think that Mr. Davy is unduly suspicious of codes, and feels that anything so material and unspiritual cannot give rise to the lofty emotions and thoughts which are supposed to give dignity to human beings. This seems to me a sheer mistake. You may be stimulated to very elevated thoughts and feelings by reading *Hamlet*, but the stimulus consists entirely of black marks on a white ground. Anything about Shakespeare that cannot be conveyed by such marks must remain unknown to us. And what is true of Shakespeare in this respect is also true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the starry heavens.

BERTRAND RUSSELL

*Plas Penrhyn*
*Penrhyndeudraeth*
*Merioneth*

## "Our Bomb and Theirs"

MAY I follow Mr. Wayland Young's example in adding a *P.S.* to "Our Bomb and Theirs"? I am at loss to understand his attitude. He proves that mankind *can* be exterminated. Although this could be deduced from Einstein's famous formula at the very moment when we learned that artificial chain-reactions were possible, the information he supplies is shattering. They strike me as an apocalypse in scientific terms.

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Mr. Young's second tenet is that mankind must *not* be exterminated. Again, my wholehearted agreement.

But why conclude that aggressors, and potential aggressors, should be given an encouragement by unilaterally disarming others? If a man is threatened with murder his natural and rational reaction is readiness to hit back. Can he prevent what awaits him by allowing the murderous weapon to become the monopoly of the murderer?

This applies to mass-extermination weapons as well as to bow-and-arrow. It applies to murderers with whom it may be worth negotiating even more than to madmen. I think it is worth negotiating thermonuclear disarmament with the Russians; I trust they are shrewd enough to know that by waiting until either China, or some more of the non-Communist powers, get hold of The Bomb they have ultimately more to lose than by accepting effective control to-day. But to lay down arms without a clear *quid pro quo* would be tantamount to inviting them to purge that part of the globe (Mr. K.: "We will bury you!") which thus declared itself unable to hit back, and which at the same time must be regarded as a source of future dangers to them.

Mr. Wayland Young thinks Alastair Buchan has been blinded by a "fairytale optimism" in his hope for mutual restraint of armed enemies. But is it less fairytale optimism to hope for the restraint of an armed power which fears no retaliation?

My conviction is that not even an approximate safeguard against total extermination can be found without the establishment of a World State. I am glad that Professor Bertrand Russell, though heading the abolitionist campaign, has come to the same conclusion and expressed it in so many words, the other night in the course of an interview on the I.T.V.: "Do you think we shall get that in our lifetime?" the interviewer asked him. "Either that," Lord Russell replied, "or your lifetime may be very short."

PAUL IGNOTUS

*London*

## The Marxists

MODERN totalitarian movements have a way of relating their attitudes to the values of the liberal age—for it was an age which gave rise to radical ideas which were subsequently impressed into the service of new and highly authoritarian structures. The relationship of Soviet Communism to classical Marxism is a case in point. The official ideology of Soviet society assumes the present reality of a post-liberal era; but it also asserts its own inheritance of the characteristic "liberal-humanist" values. In this way we get what is called Marxism-Leninism—the hyphen denoting a transition from one type of society to another (though this is not what the official ideologues have in mind when they expatiate on the subject).

George Steiner's interesting essay, "Marxism and the Literary Critic" (in the November number of ENCOUNTER) brings an admirable lucidity to bear on a wide and important range of topics. But Mr. Steiner prefaces his valuable discussion of Georg Lukacs, Lucien Goldmann, Bert Brecht, and other "para-Marxist" critics, with some highly questionable observations on what he describes as "the Marxist theory of literature" in general. Now it does not seem to me possible to deduce such a theory from Engels' common-sensical remarks about *Tendenzpoesie*, for the good reason that Engels in this instance was simply repeating what Goethe had said on the subject; and although Marx and Engels were admirers of Goethe, this does not make Goethe a Marxist. Nor is it any use quoting Lenin's naïve admonition to "comrade-writers" to turn out larger quantities of revolutionary literature; for in taking this line he was simply following the tradition of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and the other 19th-century Russian populists who had already made the point fifty years earlier. It is sometimes forgotten that Lenin was a Russian as well as a Marxist, and that a demand for *"littérature engagée"* was endemic among Russian radicals long before Marxism had been heard of. So was contempt for "anarchist intellectuals," and indeed for intellectualism as such. Even Tolstoy, who was far from being a radical, tended to think that making shoes was a more useful occupation than writing books, and his numerous followers were at one with the Bolsheviki in denigrating non-populist attitudes towards cultural life.

National attitudes apart, it is questionable whether we shall get very far by contrasting what Marx or Engels had to say on the subject with Lenin's occasional utterances. Engels, after all, was chiefly concerned with what had already occurred; his remarks on the subject of Balzac and Zola do belong to the sociology of literature. Whether one accepts them or not (I happen to think them quite sound) matters comparatively little, for in neither case is it possible to utilise them for the purpose of concocting recipes for the artistic kitchen of the future. On Hegelian-Marxist principles it is impossible to predict what the dominant art form of a socialist society is going to be, though one may be fairly certain that it won't be the novel (a thoroughly "bourgeois" creation). It is even less possible to lay down rules for artistic creation, or to state in advance what kind of attitude writers and artists should take towards their environment. But that was precisely what Lenin tried. Like other radicals of his time, he felt quite certain that art must reflect the popular consciousness (assumed to be revolutionary) although it must also help to mould it. The contradiction did not bother him. Or if it did, he resolved it by stressing the rôle of the party whose duty it was to synthesise all such conflicts. In the subsequent fully totalitarian phase, *i.e.*, under Stalin, the "moulding" process naturally became more important than the mere "reflecting" of the popular mind, which indeed was found to contain too many undesirable elements—officially described as "residues of the past." Hence the characteristic dilemma of Soviet æsthetics, always in search of the missing link between the official ideology and the canonical texts. The latter, composed as they were in the mid-19th century by two German

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scholars who took "liberal humanism" for granted, are no help to the ideologues of a totalitarian party dedicated to the proposition that artistic freedom is a "bourgeois illusion."

The writers described by Mr. Steiner as "para-Marxists" represent quite another problem. I would differ from him in calling them Marxists, as distinct from the Leninists entrenched in the U.S.S.R. Their somewhat ambiguous relationship to the "founding fathers" is perhaps best understood as a consequence of the political attitude to which they are (or were) committed. There is no way of squaring Zhdanovism (which is simply applied Leninism) with Karl Marx, but there are escape-routes for a Marxist critic domiciled in Paris (Lucien Goldmann), and even for Lukacs in Budapest. The latter, however, does not quite deserve all the praise bestowed upon him by Mr. Steiner. I am not thinking of the moral ambiguities: it is always possible to find excuses by citing the Stalinist terror, which was at its height when Lukacs published some of his least defensible utterances. But there are significant flaws in his work which might worry his admirers if they knew more about German history. It does not seem that Lukacs, who certainly has an encyclopædic knowledge of the topic, is a safe guide to the classical period of German literature, one of his main fields of interest. His voluminous writings on the subject revolve around two fairly hackneyed themes—the impact of the French Revolution on German culture, and the middle-class revolt against courtly absolutism during the late 18th-century and early 19th-century Enlightenment. That German classicism—like French classicism before it—represented a *fusion* of aristocratic and bourgeois values; that Goethe's classical Weimar is incomprehensible without the aristocratic leaven; that, in brief, there was social *co-operation* as well as *conflict*—these simple verities are never stated by him, and often implicitly denied (though they have been affirmed by other Marxist historians, including so eminent a scholar as Professor Arnold Hauser). The fact is that Lukacs has long found it possible to square his professional conscience with a grossly simplified view of history, though for his Stalinist critics even that is not enough. I am afraid that as an exponent of genuinely critical humanist thinking, he will not do; neither will his Western followers and imitators. In the end it is simple lack of candour that circumscribes their usefulness.

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

*London*

## Musical Genius

IN AN article in the January ENCOUNTER, "Ending the Great Tradition," Virgil Thomson writes: "... we, the musicians, had already standardised, brought to completion, and officialised our whole tradition, classical and modern.... So what do we do now, we composers?"

We can all sympathise with Mr. Thomson, particularly when he writes: "... it is very hard to-day to distinguish by the ear alone the work of one contemporary composer from that of another." This is the fate Tolstoy anticipated for anyone unfortunate enough to be a music critic for eighteen years. In his article which discusses much of the important music of the past fifty years, Mr. Thomson does not once mention Bartok, Sibelius, or Vaughan Williams. Each of these composers managed to make important musical contributions in highly individual ways. Each developed and adopted forms of musical expression which suited his individual needs. There is no reason to believe that future composers of comparable genius will fail to develop equally individual forms of expression to suit their needs.

As for the "we musicians" who have "standardised, brought to completion, and officialised our whole tradition classical and modern": there must be very few people who care twopence what they do.

WALTER ELTIS

*Exeter College, Oxford*

## Satire and Officialdom

THE recent fortunes of Pasternak and, in a lesser degree, of Marek Hlasko have revived argument as to what should and what, *over there*, does constitute the dividing line between criticism and condemnation, satire and sabotage in a writer. Under this rubric it may be instructive to compare not only the official but also the public reception in Poland of Hlasko and of Slawomir Mrozek, whose play *The Police* is noticed in the December number of ENCOUNTER. Both are under thirty, both may be called satirists, both have won public literary awards (Mrozek, in 1957, for his collection of stories and *feuilletons* entitled *The Elephant*).

The majority, however, of those with whom I spoke on a recent visit, while reaffirming belief in Hlasko's talent and indignant on principle that his *Cemeteries* had had to be published abroad, expressed the opinion that this work was weaker than his earlier stories both as literature and as political criticism precisely because of the explicit character of the latter. By contrast, Mrozek, who pillories mercilessly, in a manner reminiscent of that of Ilf and Petrov, "Socialist" excesses and absurdities, has, because he does not insinuate into his writing any personal mood, made the public laugh without, seemingly, drawing down the frowns of officialdom. The moral might seem to be the old one that satire, as a weapon of criticism, both gives less offence and strikes harder home when directed with equanimity than when steeped in gall.

MARCUS WHEELER

*Oxford*

[LEOPOLD LABEDZ, *who edits our "From the Other Shore" department, writes: "Mr. Wheeler is right in pointing out the difference in styles of Hlasko and Mrozek, but his conclusions need to be qualified.*

*Unlike Mrozek, Hlasko cannot be on the whole described as a satirist. He reacted with such disgust against the 'socialist-realist' double-talk in literature that he had little patience for innuendo and writing*

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*between the lines. Can he really be reproached for using a more explicit style (even if it seems 'inadvisable' for tactical reasons)?*

*Explicitness itself may or may not make the art inferior; it certainly does not necessarily make the political criticism weaker. The connection between artistic merits and political attitudes is direct and simple only for the literary policemen. Both Polish writers, it seems to me, are entitled to their representative styles whatever the respective size of their gall-bladders. Nor is the relation between style and gall obvious. Indirectness may not reflect equanimity: Swift's satire was steeped in gall. Indirectness* and *equanimity have not saved Pasternak from being accused in* Pravda *of giving 'vent to his revengeful gall.' It is better to abstain from giving advice to writers, struggling in difficult circumstances, as to the style or* genre *they should adopt and what emotions they should discreetly suppress.*

*It is precisely the fate of the good-humoured writings of Ilf and Petrov (or of Zoshchenko) which illustrates how precarious the position of satire is under a dictatorship. The present situation in Poland is different, but it is deteriorating; and should the totalitarian notion of literary sabotage be adopted, it could be applied not only to Hlasko's explicit criticism, branded in Russia as 'literary hooliganism,' but also to the well-aimed thrusts of Mrozek. His style is no guarantee that his penetrating satire may not be taken for, if I may say so, Juvenal delinquency.*]

## Colour and England

I AGREE with Mr. Dan Jacobson. It is very embarrassing when "anybodies" behave brutally. I too believe that the explanations for "nigger-hunting" in Notting Hill have been inadequate, and accept that the nine youths and many who followed their example were "the victims of a complex of attitudes and beliefs which seem to be in the very bone and marrow of what we call 'our civilisation.'" However, when Mr. Jacobson speaks of "a kind of moral symbolism that was already there, as it were, in the structure of the white mind," I think he is parting from the facts, or if indeed this is a fact there are others in the English mental climate far more pertinent to English racial prejudice. Despite his wish not to make something occult of racial prejudice, he is doing just that. Not only that, but also providing himself and other bored British liberals with an unnecessary distraction.

If a culture does not satisfy the emotional needs of its youth, they will seek to bind themselves in splinter groups, and if through ignorance and social pressure they are unable to do this constructively they will surely do so through violence, dress, talk of violence, or some mystical cult—depending on their level of sophistication. In this flotsam and jetsam of British culture, the youth—race-rioters, Mosleyites, angry young men, intellectuals—are all terribly bored, all motivated by the same need, a need for emotional communion. It so happens that the rioters were less capable of finding a convenient fad to stave off boredom than Mr. Jacobson or myself, consequently they were more desperate, more primed to brutality. I suggest that the matter of West Indians being the "chosen race" in Notting Hill is of secondary importance when placed beside the matter of the terrible boredom which impelled a group of "anybodies" to commit brutal acts.

It is well known that intense feelings of comradeship are achieved through violence and disaster, and I believe that the young "nigger-hunters" of Notting Hill experienced, through their brutality, a spiritual communion far more intense and satisfying than could be provided by any English entertainment or institution. At the same time, let me make it quite clear that I condemn violence.

I am under the impression that a middle-class barrier prevents Mr. Jacobson from taking the next few steps along the hard road of facts, but permits him to grow wings and to fly up into the occult at a crucial moment; prevents him from asking the far more pertinent question—*What's wrong with the British way of life?* At least he felt something in common between himself and those youths who stood in the dock, for he felt embarrassed. But if he is set on saying something of real value, and I believe he can, on racial prejudice and violence in Britain, he must try to share more than "a kind of moral symbolism in the structure of the white mind" with those nine "vicious and stupid" boys. He must try to share their boredom without finding comfort in theories imported from fad-ridden America. At this moment I believe that Mr. Frank Norman would be in a better position to give us a view of the motives that impelled "nigger-hunting" in Notting Hill. Excuse my bad manners, but I wonder what Mr. Jacobson would have thought of Mr. Norman if he had seen this erstwhile "nobody" standing in the dock at the Old Bailey, with his far from spindly frame, his sullen features, his large sensuous eyes, the vicious razor slash across his cheek, his slouch?

Why are not Indians and Pakistanis nearly so much in the young British worker's eye as West Indians? Calypsos included, the West Indians are culturally more like the English than Pakistanis or Indians. English is their mother-tongue. They come from islands which are a cultural extension of the British Isles. They walk about the streets with the same vivacity and excitement that was present in the English after the war when austerity began to thaw, when shop-windows were crammed with attractive things (perhaps with the same animation that Mr. Jacobson experienced when he went shopping in American department stores). They come from poverty-imposed austerity to a relative wonderland. In this wonderland they wear or use the things they buy with a magnificent nouveau-riche jauntiness. Vivacity rubs on to inanimate things. Everything they touch, the clothes they wear, actually seem to be "better," and they move, in the streets, amongst people who are bored and anxious in the wonderland, people who have lost their gay vivacity and whose clothes, therefore, seem to be "worse." Like the West Indian, the young British worker, for lack of anything else, carries a good deal of his bit of British culture on his back. West Indians wear their clothes triumphantly but young British workers tend to wear them as shields of

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which they are not sure. No wonder there is resentment! Perhaps clothes in London play just as important a part in racial prejudice as that other visual attribute, skin-colour.

SINCLAIR BEILES

*The English Bookshop*
*Paris*

## Aliens and Filing Cabinets

ONE's reaction to Miss Shirley Deane's account of her expulsion from Spain ["Expulsada," ENCOUNTER, February] is that of irritation.... Although she had apparently spent sufficient time in Spain to have gained some knowledge of the country, and had also realised that it is administered as a police state complete with censorship, she seemed naïvely surprised when these facts finally intruded into her personal life.

I do not understand the object of this publicity. Is it in order to revive that Anglo-Saxon interference in Iberian affairs, which has been traditional since John of Gaunt tried to tidy up the Iberian Peninsular? ...

Of course my sympathies are entirely with Miss Deane and her husband at having to leave such an agreeable country as Spain, but she obviously does not realise how articles such as she has written can only succeed in furthering the already widespread ignorance about Spain and its past and present régimes. However, one must admit that living for any length of time south of the Pyrenees tends to diminish the average European sense of proportion.

At the same time I am immensely grateful for the description of the animated scene in the Madrid archives, and the spirited search through the confidential files. After all, this may inspire disaffected aliens in this country, who, even now, may be advancing with set purpose upon the Home Office filing cabinets. We must remember that aliens have been deported at short notice and without information even from the U.K., and that we also have a censorship....

S. BRYGMANN

*London, N.W.11*

## Fates Worse Than Death

*It looks as though we are entering one of those periods in which life is dominated by concern for other people's daughters. Would you want your daughter to marry a coloured man? If not, let Mr. Butler deport them when he feels like it. Would you want her to read* LOLITA *at the age of ten? If not, let Mr. Butler ban it. Would you want her to be a prostitute? If not, let Mr. Butler jail them....*

*I can think of a stream of things I should dislike my daughter to do—from being a barmaid to writing for* ENCOUNTER....

DAVID ROSS, in TRIBUNE (London), 16th January

# *AUTHORS*

THE last book of **Rose Macaulay,** who died in October, 1958, was *The Towers of Trebizond* (Collins). SIR HAROLD NICOLSON published last year *Journey to Java* and *Sainte-Beuve* (Constable). WILLIAM PLOMER's second volume of autobiography *At Home* was published last year by Jonathan Cape. ALAN PRYCE-JONES is editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*. C. V. WEDGWOOD, historian, is at present at work on a history of the Great Rebellion of which the first two books, *The King's Peace* and *The King's War* have been already published by Collins. ANTHONY POWELL's latest novel, *At Lady Molly's*, was published by Heinemann. LADY DIANA COOPER has now completed a second volume of autobiography, *The Light of Common Day* (Hart-Davis). LORD KINROSS is a journalist and writer of travel books. His latest, on America, is called *The Innocents at Home*. ROSAMOND LEHMANN has started work on a new novel. She has just been appointed Northcliffe Lecturer in English at University College, London. DWIGHT MACDONALD, formerly with ENCOUNTER, has returned to the staff of *The New Yorker*. MARK BONHAM CARTER is Liberal M.P. for Torrington.

**Vincent Brome** has written four biographies, a play, a novel, and several B.B.C. Third Programme features. He has a new novel, *Sometimes at Night*, coming from Cassell in the autumn.

**Vladimir Nabokov** the distinguished Russian author and critic, has published a memoir of his childhood in Russia, a novel about Berlin, and one "about America" (*Lolita*). This month Heinemann publishes a collection of his short stories, *Nabokov's Dozen*.

Our attention has been called to the fact that puzzle-minded ENCOUNTER readers may be interested in looking for a coded message that occurs on the last page of the story. A prize of one guinea is offered to the first five readers who crack the code.

**Wladimir Weidlé** is a well-known Russian art critic living in Paris. Many of his books have been translated into English, including *Russia: Absent and Present* (Hollis & Carter).

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